BRIGANDS

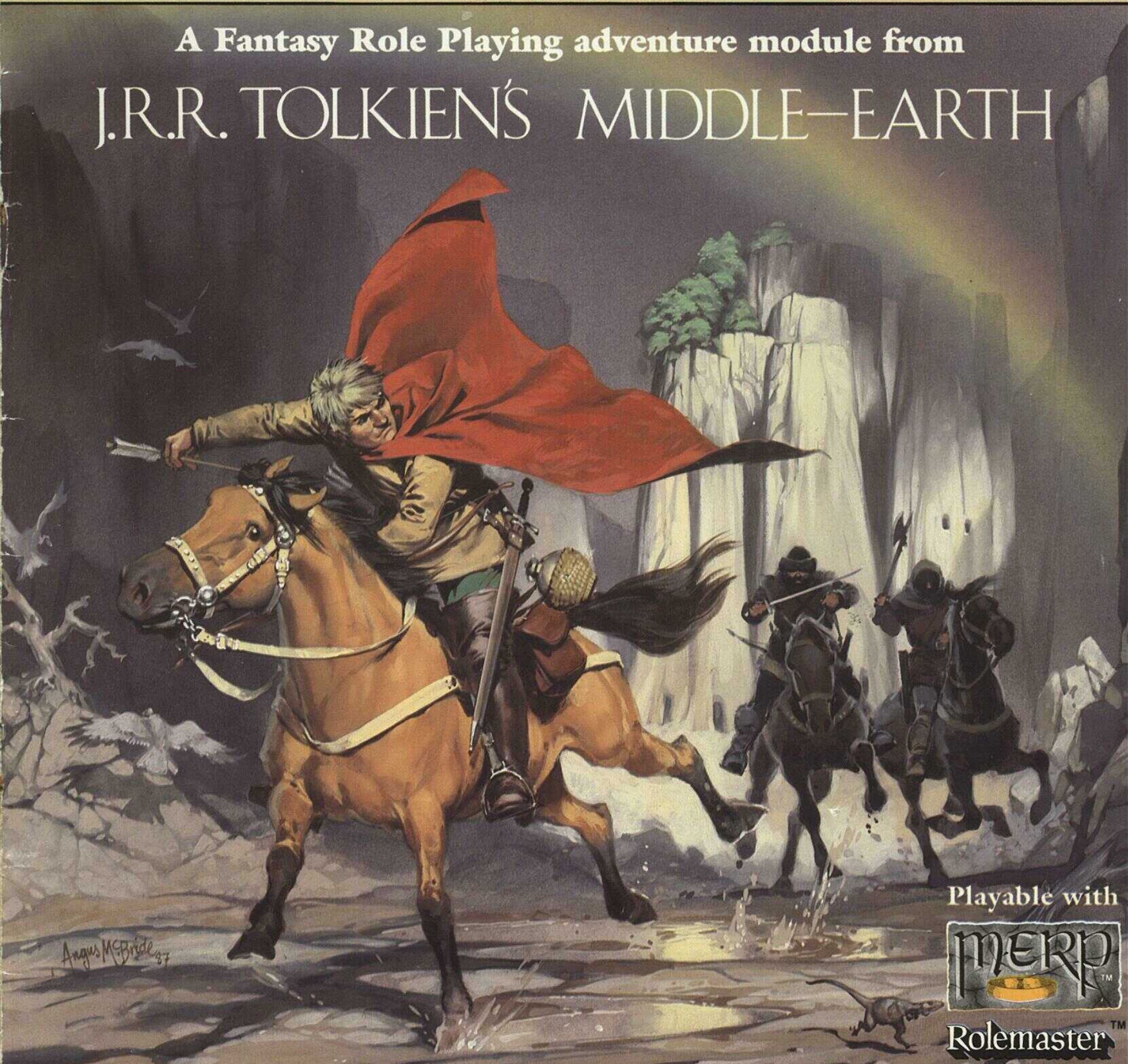
OF MIRKWOOD™

St. #8090

I.C.E.

A Fantasy Role Playing adventure module from

J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S MIDDLE-EARTH



Playable with

MERP™

Rolemaster™

Based on THE HOBBIT™ and THE LORD OF THE RINGS™, this supplement is set in the most remarkable town of southern Rhovanion. Hazard the gullies and ravines that form the streets of Strayhold, a few miles south and east of Mirkwood. Called by many names, few of which are complimentary, it is home to scores of merchants and travellers who ply the Road to Rhûn. It also harbors an unsavory lot of highwaymen, petty thieves, and beggars. Brigands features three complete adventures. All are self-contained, and can easily be used in other locales.



Taur-e-Ndaedelos
Angálaladh
Cor Angálaladh
Buhr Widu
MEN-I-ARAW
Buhr Ailgra
Aur Esgalabar
MEN CELDUIN

BRIGANDS OF MIRKWOOD™

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The cave-cut spires of the Shattered Step that surrounds Strayhold glimmered beneath a newborn rainbow. Music and voices echoed through the canyon's breaks, only to be drowned by the sounds of splattering hoofbeats. Three riders thundered through the fells, scattering the creatures that resurfaced after the rain.

Marhic clenched his teeth and felt the blood from his broken tongue slide down his taut throat. He knew he couldn't rely on the speed of a stolen horse, particularly in the muddy breaks, so he clenched his bow and reached for the magic arrow. As the two pursuers closed, he cursed the sky for denying him the cover of the storm. "Why, pray tell, should Araw reward these rogues with anything but a burning barb?"

Marhic looked back, catching a glimpse of the two rogues amidst the wild flapping of his scarlet cape. He recognized the hooded one as Low Nose the Asdriag. Anger replaced Mahric's fear, and the Northman freed his arrow from its quiver. Then he calmly muttered to his mount: "Give me fifty yards, beast, just fifty yards..."

FORWARD

Brigands of Mirkwood is a Middle-earth Adventure Module set in southern Rhovanion. Centered around the trade town of Strayhold, near the main road between Gondor and Rhun, it contains three complete adventures. It is unlike ICE's previously published Adventure Modules, since more space is devoted to the adventures and less is used for background material. In addition, the setting and the related adventures are designed to be self-contained, so that they can be moved to other locales within (or even outside) Middle-earth.

Player characters (PCs) designed for use with these adventures are provided in Section 2.0, although the Gamemaster (GM) may wish to allow the players to use their own PCs or he may want to design new PCs for them. The town of Strayhold is described in detail in Section 3.0. Sections 4.0, 5.0, and 6.0 each cover one of the three adventures.

1.0 GUIDELINES

Fantasy role playing is akin to a living novel where the players are the main characters. Everyone combines to write a story which is never short of adventure. They help create a new land and strange new tales.

This series is designed as a tool for Gamemasters (GMs) who wish to run scenarios or campaigns set in J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth. The adventure modules are complete and ready-to-run studies of very specific areas, and are intended to be used with a minimum of additional work. Each has statistical information based on the ***Middle-earth Role Playing (MERP) and Rolemaster (RM)*** fantasy systems. The modules are, however, adaptable for use with most major role playing games. Creative guidelines, not absolutes, are emphasized.

PROFESSOR TOLKIEN'S LEGACY

Each module is based on extensive research and attempts to meet the high standards associated with the Tolkien legacy. Rational linguistic, cultural, and geological data are employed. Interpretive material has been included with great care, and fits into defined patterns and schemes. ICE does not intend it to be the sole or proper view; instead, we hope to give the reader the thrust of the creative processes and the character of the given area.

Remember that the ultimate sources of information are the works of Professor J.R.R. Tolkien. Posthumous publications edited by his son Christopher shed additional light on the world of Middle-earth. These modules are derived from ***The Hobbit*** and ***The Lord of the Rings***, although they have been developed so that no conflict exists with any of the other sources.

1.1 DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

The following abbreviations and terms are used throughout the series.

1.11 ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations are listed alphabetically within subcategories.

GAME SYSTEMS

MERP .....Middle-earth Role Playing ***RM .....Rolemaster***

CHARACTER STATS

Ag .....Agility(RM/MERP)	*Me ....Memory(RM)*
Co......Constitution(RM/MERP)	*Ig ......Intelligence(MERP)*
St....... Strength(RM/MERP)	*Re .....Reasoning(RM)*
PR .....Presence(RM/MERP)	*Em ....Empathy(RM)*
It(In) Intuition(RM/MERP)	*Qu .....Quickness(RM)*
Sd...... Self Discipline(RM)	

GAME TERMS

AT .....ArmorType	Lvl ......Level (exp. or spell level)
bp.......bronze piece(s)	MA......Martial Arts
cp ....copper piece(s)	Mod ....Modifier or Modification
Crit ....Critical strike	mp ....mithril piece(s)
D........Die or Dice	NPC ....Non-player Character
D100 ..Percentile Dice Result	OB ...... Offensive bonus
DB .....Defensive Bonus	PC.......Player Character
FRP....Fantasy Role Playing	PP........Power Points
GM ....Gamemaster	R or Rad ....Radius
gp....... gold pieces(s)	Rnd or Rd........Round
ip........iron piece(s)	RR.......Resistance Roll
jp........jade piece(s)	Stat...... Statistic or Characteristic
tp........tin piece(s)	

MIDDLE-EARTH TERMS

A....... Adunaic	Kh....... Khuzdul (Dwarvish)
BS.....Black Speech	***LotR .. The Lord of the Rings***
Cir.....CirthorCertar	Or .... Orkish
D ....Dunael (Dunlending)	Q.........Quenya
Du .....Daenael (Old Dunael)	R ....Rohirric
E ....Edain	Rh ....Rhovanion
El ......Eldarin	S ....Sindarin
Es......Easterling	S.A .....Second Age
1.A ....First Age	Si........ Silvan Elvish
F.A ....Fourth Age	T.A..... Third Age
Hi......Hillman	Teng ...Tengwar
H.......Hobbitish(Westron variant)	V.........Variag
Har....Haradrim	W ...Westron(Common Speech)
Hob...Hobbit	Wo...... Wose(Druedain)
Kd..... Kuduk(ancient Hobbitish)	

1.12 DEFINITIONS

A few crucial concepts are detailed below. The majority of unique terms and translations from The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings can be found in the text proper.

Andor: (S. "Land of the Gift.") Sindarin label for Niimenor (Westemesse).

Dol Guldur: (S. "Hill of Dark Socery") The home of Sauron (Aka.'The Necromancer") while he convalesced from the fall of Numenor; and later the citadel of Khamul the Ringwraith. Dol Guldur cast a great shadow on Greenwood Forest, corrupting and darkening it, until it fell for the most part under his influence.

Dunedain: (S. "Edain of the West"; sing. Dunadan). These High Men are descendants of the Edain who settled the western island continent of

Numenor around S.A. 32. The Dunedain returned to explore, trade with, colonize, and later conquer many areas along the western, southern, and eastern coasts of Endor during the Second Age. Unfortunately, their hubris and desire for power led them to attempt an invasion of the Valar's Undying Lands. As a result, Eru (the One) destroyed their home island in S.A. 3319. Those called the "Faithful" opposed the policies and jealous Elf-hatred that prompted this "Downfall." The Faithful were saved when Numenor sank, sailing east to northwestern Middle-earth. There they found the "Realms in Exile," the kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor. Although sparsely populated, Arthedain (in Arnor) contains the highest proportion of the Faithful and the most purely Dunedain culture in all of Endor. Many "unfaithful" (or "Black Numenor can") groups survive as well, living in colonies and independent states such as Umbar.

The term Dunedain refers to the Numenoreans and their descendants in Middle-earth, groups which possess considerable physical and mental strength, longevity, and a rich Elven-influenced culture. Adunaic is their native language.

Dunlendings: (Dn. "Daen Lintis.") A rugged race of Common Men who, for the most part, migrated out of the White Mountains in the Second Age. The Eredrim of Dor-en-Emil are a related folk. Descendants of the Daen Coenis, Dunlendings have a medium or stocky build, sparse brown hair, and tanned or ruddy complexions. Men average 5' 10"; women stand around *5'6".* Mostly mountain-dwellers or hill-loving herders, they are known by various names: Dunmen, Dunnish Folk, Dunlanders, Eredrim, the Hillmen of the White Mountains, etc.

Eldar: (Q. "Elves"; "People of the Stars".) The Calaquendi (Q. "High Elves"), who made the Great Journey to the Undying Lands.

Gondor: (S. "Stone-land.") The great Dunedain kingdom that lies west of Mordor and north of the Bay of Belfalas. It includes a number of regions: (clockwise from the north) Calenardhon (Rohan after T.A. 2510); Anorien; Ithilien; Lebennin; Belfalas; Lamedon; Anfalas; and Andrast. Osgiliath on the Anduin serves as the Gondorian capital until T.A. 1640, when the throne is moved to Minas Anor (Minas Tirith).

Lorien: (S."— Dream".) Also known at various times as Lothlorien (S. "Dreamflower"), Laurelindorenan (S. "Land of the Valley of Singing Gold"), Lorinand, Lindorinand (N. "Land of the Singers"), and Dwimordene (R. "Haunted Valley".) The Golden Wood was formally established by Galadriel in T.A. 1375, although a number of Nandor Elves preceded her there.

Mirkwood: The great stretch of western forest called by the Elves Taur-e-Ndaedlos (S. "Forest of Great Fear"). Like the Old Forest and Fangorn, it is a remnant of the great forest which once covered most of northwestern Endor. Prior to the end of the first millennium T.A. it was known as "Greenwood the Great," but the Shadow of Sauron altered the very essence of the region. Southern Mirkwood is that area south of the Men-i-Naugrim.

Necromancer: More properly the *Necromancer ofDol Guldur,* this was Sauron while in disguise as he assimilated his power once again. Sauron's natural form was destroyed in the cataclysm, but his spirit was able to escape. Though it took centuries, his evil will was so powerful that he was able to take shape again—though he could never assume a fair form such as he could before. While many of the Wise suspected that it was indeed the Dark Lord, they were unable to decide on a method of dealing with this potential threat. When he was finally driven out in the late Third Age, his home in Mordor was already prepared to receive him.

Noldor: (Q. "The Wise"; alt. "The Deep Elves".) The Second Kindred of the Eldar.

Northmen: Also called Northrons. A grouping of tall, strong, fair and hairy mannish folk. They are of the "Middle Men,", a group culturally and physically closer to Elves than those labelled common," but nonetheless distinct from the: High Men" or Edain. Branches of the Northmen include: (1) the Wood-men, (2) the Plains-men or *Gramuz,* (3) the Lake-men, (4) the Dale-men, (5) the Eothraim, and (6) the distant Beijabar — all Rhovanion peoples in T.A. 1640. The Rohirrim of the late Third Age are descendants of Rhovanion Northmen.

Rhosgobel: Home of the Istar *Radagast the Brown* in Mirkwood.

Rhovanion: Also called *Wilderland.* Traditionally, this region includes all of the land south of the Ered Mithrin and north of Mordor between the Misty Mountains and the Carnen. The principality of the same name, however, was that region ruled by the Northman king Vidugavia during the 14th century T.A.; this area was east of Mirkwood and west of the Celduin. Some confused reports have shown the Celduin as the eastern border of the larger geographical expanse. This area includes Mirkwood.

Silvan: All of the Elves who are not Eldar.

Sindar: (S. "Grey Elves", alt. "Elves of Twilight".) The Sindar are neither Moriquendi nor Eldar.

1.3 CONVERTING STATISTICS

When using this supplement with your FRP campaign, be careful to note the character statistics before beginning play. Should any adjustments need to be made, you may wish to consider the following guidelines. The material provided is in terms of percentages and is intended to give the reader a relatively clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the individuals and creatures discussed. Most FRP systems will relate to the data, and conversion should be simple; remember, however, that there are dozens of role playing rules and the change-over from the statistics given here may be troublesome.

CONVERTING STATISTICS FOR ANY MAJOR FRP SYSTEM

All the statistics and numerical information used in this module are expressed on a closed or open-ended scale with a 1-100 base. They are designed for use with percentile dice (D100). Use the chart below to derive appropriate bonuses or to convert the 1-100 numbers to figures suitable for non-percentile systems.

1-100 Stat	D100 Bonus	D20 Bonus	3-18 Stat	2-12 Stat
102+	+35	+7	20+	17+
101	+30	+6	19	15-16
100	+25	+5	18	13-14
98-99	+20	+4	17	12
95-97	+15	+3	16	
90-94	+10	+2	15	11
85-89	+5	+1	14	10
75-84	+5	+1	13	9
60-74	0	0	12	8
40-59	0	0	10-11	7
25-39	0	0	9	6
15-24	-5	-1	8	5
10-14	-5	-1	7	4
5-9	-10	-2	6	3
3-4	-15	-3	5	
2	-20	-4	4	2
1	-25	-4	4	2

2.0 PLAYER CHARACTERS

The following Section provides a sampling of pregenerated characters of varying professions and levels. Each set of characters is tailored for one of the adventures in Sections 4.0 through 7.0.

The characters' statistics are given on the table in Section 2.4 and cover both ***MERP*** and ***Rolemaster.*** The GM may wish to assign each player a character or he can allow them to pick from the list. Of course, the GM can utilize the unused PCs as non-player characters. After all, the players may want to design their own characters or employ the characters they already use.

The GM should remember, however, that regardless of how the players acquire their characters, each adventure is geared for a different difficulty level. We suggest characters tough enough to meet the challenge.

NAME:	Framwini	Wiglaf	Trenya	Devin	Terelin	Tallow	Segis	Reya	Palan	Weard	Cunda	Helden	Gwalin	Eslin	Armacil	Aithel	Behren	Laurindel
Race/Sex:	Nrthm/m	Nrthm/m	Wdmn/f	Drwin/m	SilElf/m	Dún/m	Urbm/m	Urbm/f	Dúna/m	Nrthm/m	Nrthm/f	Nrthm/m	Dwarf/m	Dúna/m	Dúna/m	Roh/m	Dorwi/m	Sinda/m
Ht/Wt:	6'1"/190	5'4"/120	5'1"/98	5'10"/240	6'/105	6'4"/186	6'/180	5'8"/110	6'5"/250	6'/172	5'6"/120	6'1"/178	4'8"/150	6'2"/160	6'4"/210	6'/170	6'/155	6'2"/150
Hair:	Blond	Blond	Blond	Brown	Sandy	Black	Brown	Red	Black	Blond	Blond	Blond	Blue	Black	Black	Blond	Brown	Blond
Eyes:	Green	Grey	Blue	Brown	Green	Blue	Black	Green	Blue	Blue	Green	Green	Green	Black	Blue	Green	Brown	Grey
Profession:	Warrior	Scout	Ranger	Animist	Bard	Mage	Warrior	Scout	Ranger	Animist	Bard	Mage	Warrior	Scout	Ranger	Animist	Bard	Mage
Level:	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	5
Hits:	47	26	33	18	16	21	63	37	45	31	29	29	91	45	60	38	37	39
AT(DB):	RL(30)	No(20)	SL(35)	SL(25)	No(20)	No(10)	Ch(50)	SL(15)	SL(20)	RL(5)	No(20)	No(10)	Ch(20)	SL(25)	Ch(15)	RL(25)	No(30)	No(10)
Shield:	Y(25)	N	Y(25)	Y(25)	N	N	Y(25)	N	Y(20)	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y(25)	N	N
PPoints:	1	0	2	2	2(+1)	3	0	0(3)	3	9(+1)	6	18	0	0	5	30	10(+3)	30
Base Sp OB	0	0	0	7	11	2	0	0	0	6	3	6	0	0	0	10	5	10
ST:	98	65	80	88	70	53	98	60	93	70	70	68	96	72	95	70	65	51
AG:	80	99	94	60	99	90	91	95	70	80	98	91	76	100	77	73	90	92
CO:	65	80	90	95	85	60	86	72	86	53	80	70	90	83	83	81	70	80
IG:	80	70	53	80	98	100	60	90	63	89	96	100	81	79	60	79	95	98
IT:	50	50	99	98	64	80	51	65	92	100	61	85	73	85	86	96	82	73
PR:	71	80	70	79	80	80	73	80	60	77	75	73	82	72	82	84	89	88
APP:	68	63	72	70	96	91	66	95	51	89	45	61	41	68	61	80	80	77
NA MovM:	+15	+25	+15	+15	+25	+25	+10	+35	+15	+10	+20	+10	+10	+35	+10	+5	+15	+20
SL MovM:	+0	+5	+5	-5	+5	—	—	+25	+5	+10	+10	—	—	+20	+5	—	—	—
RL MovM:	+5	+5	0	-20	-5	—	—	—	—	+5	—	—	—	—	—	+5	—	—
Ch MovM:	-25	0	0	-35	-15	—	+5	—	—	—	—	—	+10	—	0	—	—	—
1 HE OB:	+43bs	+21ss	+40ss	—	+20bs	—	+89bs	+63ss	+79	—	—	+25da	—	+80ss	+60ss	+45bs	—	—
1 HC OB:	—	—	—	+15ma	—	—	—	—	—	+45ma	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2H OB:	—	—	—	—	—	+15qs	—	—	—	—	+28qs	—	115ba	—	+100th	—	+45qs	+20qs
Thrown OB:	+28sp	+41da	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	+20ma	—	+20da	+80ha	—	+45ss	—	+55sp	—
Missile OB:	—	—	+32sb	—	+46lb	—	+55lb	+58sb	+31	—	+43lb	—	—	+55ss	—	+35sb	—	—
Pole-arm OB:	+33sp	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Climb:	+20	+30	+35	+6	+26	+15	+25	+38	+29	+18	+23	+10	+28	+85	+45	+25	+25	+15
Ride:	+10	+10	+18	+21	+10	+10	+18	+13	+34	+23	+13	+15	+22	+25	+50	+60	+30	+15
Swim:	+5	+15	+13	+6	+6	+15	+16	+23	+19	+8	+18	+10	+10	+20	+20	+15	+10	+10
Track:	+10	+10	+8	+16	+21	+20	+13	+18	+24	+18	+18	+10	+25	+15	+45	+25	+10	+5
Ambush:	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	1	5	3	0	0	0
Stalk/Hide:	+10	+32	+18	+5	+36	—	+15	+31	+46	+10	+33	+15	+15	+40	+40	+20	+30	+10
Pick Locks:	—	+17	+5	+10	+16	—	+10	+25	+5	+10	+23	-10	+25	+35	+10	+10	+40	+20
Disarm Traps:	—	+17	-15	-10	-10	—	+5	+25	+10	+25	+13	-20	+25	+35	+10	+10	+20	+5
Read Runes:	+5	-25	-25	+16	+21	+30	-25	-25	-25	+23	+38	+46	-25	-25	+5	+30	+45	+60
Use Items:	-25	-25	-25	+26	+16	+21	-25	-25	-25	+23	+23	+36	-25	-25	-20	+45	+45	+40
Directed Spells:	-15	-5	-20	-18	-10	+17	-15	-10	-10	+21	+23	+49	-15	-5	-20	+25	+20	+70
Perception:	+5	+13	+15	+21	+20	+15	+15	+31	+26	+38	+28	+15	+15	+50	+50	+40	+30	+20
Secon. Skills:	Forage20	Trick45	Forage25	Dance20	Trick55	Medit35	Forage25	Trick55	Forage55	P.S.55	Sing60	Weath55	Mining80	Acrob75	Traps60	P.S.55	Sing60	StarG.55
Secon. Skills:	Ropes15				Sing55	Stargz40	Stargz40	Sing25	TrapB45						Weath55			Sing60
Language:	Wes5	Wes5	Nah5	Wes5	Wes5	Wes5	Wes5	Wes5	Wes5	Wes5	Wes5	Wes5	Khu5	Wes5	Wes5	Roh5	Loga5	Sind5
Language:	Dun3	Dun3	Wes4	Log5	Sind5	Adu4	Log4	Nah4	Adú5	Dun2	Roh5	Nah5	Wes5	Adú5	Adú5	Wes5	Wes5	Wes5
Language:		Sind2	Sind2	Sind3	Que2	Sind3	Sind2	Wail3	Bet4	Sind2	Log5	Bet4	Adú4		Sind4	Dun3	Bet4	Que5
Language:				Sil3		SpiritM				Adú3	Sind3		Dun3		Bet3		Roh4	Adú4
Spell Lists:			Path M	Surf W	ContS			UnbarW	CalmS.	SurfW	ContS	FireL			CalmS	BloodW	ContS	WindL
Spell Lists:				BloodW						BloodW	Lore	WindL			PathM	SurfW	Lore	FireL
Spell Lists:										CalmS	SpiritM	LightL				B/M W	SoundC	LightL
Spell Lists:										B/M W	EssPer	LivChn				AnimM	SpiritM	WatL
Spell Lists:												SpiritM				CalmS		LivChn
Spell Lists:																		

3.0 STRAYHOLD

Some miles to the south and east of the great forest of Mirkwood, just out from the East Bight, is situated a town of a most remarkable nature. It is called by many names, few of which are complimentary, and is home to the most unsavory lot of brigands and merchants ever to assemble in Wilderland. This is Buhr Waldlaes (Rh. "Lawless Hold"), the so-called Strayhold of Dor Rhunen. Others call it Fire Town (Rh. "Brandaroth"), for its undying, torchlit, nightlife. Its light illuminates the nearby hollows of Rhovanion's Shattered Step.

Along the Men-i-Araw, as along any major trade route, there have always been wandering folk, rogues and strays, doxies, and showmen, all hoping to tap into the wealth that follows the road. The wanderers of southern Rhovanion have, however, found a place to settle down... they have a town. The strays have traded their wagons and walking sticks for permanent homes tucked within the gullies and ravines southeast of Mirkwood. Formed by a rushing stream, which drops to the level of the plain about twenty miles from the eaves of the great forest, Strayhold houses a rich collection of brigands and merchants and serves as the winter home of numerous Northman herders and warriors. This rude community is renowned for its Rogues' Mark—a quarter that stands alone — living off the traders that pass nearby, and the travellers who come to them for a taste of the wild life.

The settlement carries the air of a dark carnival. It is a rag-tag collection of buildings, ranging from the shanties and shacks of the poor and the newcomers to the expansive Hall of the Angry Horse and the sturdy Clan-hall of the Rogues. The ravines which channel its corduroy streets form an impressive labyrinth for the eyes of any who do not know them. They are filled during all but the latest hours with hawkers and revellers. Strayhold's ever-changing array of crowded shops cater to strays and rogues out to spend the cash they have earned in the villages of Rhovanion and Gondor, or to travellers looking for excitement or rare goods. All manner of merchandise and services are available within this town's tangled streets, and the sellers run the gamut from friendly and helpful to deadly and dangerous. Unfortunately, most of the inhabitants lean toward the latter disposition.

Though the settlement, taken as a whole, seems an evil place, not all of its citizens fit this mold. Many came here as refugees from various natural disasters or wars. They and their children are often more good natured than the long time natives. Generally, the ranks of the common craftsmen are filled with such stock while the first families of the settlement have tended toward darker professions. Nonetheless, living for even a few years in such a clime tends to alter one's perspective on life. Outsiders or strangers who expect the smiling faces and open handedness they knew at home are likely to be disappointed. Even the most good-hearted of this town's folk have seen enough evil to make them quite reluctant to go far out of their way for any stranger. As businessmen, many shopkeepers assume a jovial guise, but when pressed beyond the normal realms of business most will quickly clam up and offer their erstwhile customer a brusk farewell.

THE PECULIAR CLANS OF STRAYHOLD

While Fire Town is essentially a Northman community, its varied populace and unique lifestyles have spawned an unusual variation of the traditional structure. Many of the tribal and clanal units found in other Northman towns are all but absent in Strayhold. Dunadan influence is very strong, particularly among the settlement's merchants and artisans. Strayhold's guilds originated from Gondorian roots, although some have ties to the associations found in the Celduin Valley, like those of Esgaroth and Londaroth.

Because of the chaotic nature of life in Brandaroth, a parallel society has developed alongside the usual Northman or Dunadan forms. The disenchanted, disenfranchised, or lawless elements have created their own order, allying themselves in clans which have no basis in kinship or cultural origin. Instead, these low-clans are like guilds, associations born out of a common purpose. Composed of an amalgam of folk from varying lands and races, they adhere to their own peculiar creed. Greed, security, and power bind them, not tradition or blood. Their membership is secretive, their means ruthless, and two such clans wield considerable strength.

THE MASTERS OF FIRE TOWN

Among the many citizens of the town, power is held by three factions. First of these in numbers is the Clan of Strays, professionals who use their deformities or pleas, real or fabricated, to pry coppers from the rich of the surrounding lands. At home they shed the guise of weakness and take full part in the politics of the settlement, focusing primarily on their unending war with their rivals, the Rogues.

The Rogues' Clan is the second power of the Fire Town. Like the strays they do most of their "business" abroad. Although members of both groups ply their trade on their home streets — exacting money from the weak or unwary and offering "security" for the shops of the town — they use their abode primarily as a battleground.

This is, at least, the way the strays and rogues would have it, if it were not for the existence of the third element of the power balance: the Mage. This accomplished magician holds the other two factions in check, thus keeping the life of the settlement relatively stable. Strayhold is in an uneasy and not unbroken state of truce.

ECURIS



3.1 THE CLAN OF STRAYS

If there is any one thing on which the rogues of Strayhold will all agree, it is their hatred of the Clan of Strays. This brotherhood is formed of men who prey upon the charity of others and turn a tidy profit at it. Across the nearby lands they use every ruse they can to play upon the pity of good souls. They feign weakness and poverty, but under their rags most are quite sturdy save for a missing hand or a twisted limb. In their wickedness, they turn from even such labor as their deformities would allow to act as parasites upon society. Their ruffians will push truly destitute strays away from the better corners and settle themselves to pull in the alms. Little wonder that the Rogues despise these men who will not do "honest work" to bring in their ill-gotten gain.

The brotherhood is run by a nasty tyrant known as Gam the Fair. He is anything but pretty, his face ruined by a childhood pox, but he is strong and brutal. Though some few of his following put art into their work, taking pride in a well run scam, the method he propounds is rude and obnoxious, forcing the mark to give or have his stomach turned. He has no subtlety and rules his mob without mercy or compassion.

Gam's main concern is doing any harm he can to the Rogues. His thugs have standing orders to do whatever possible to foil their enemies at every turn. A thief alone in a strays' alley soon finds himself deep in trouble. It is only the power of the Mage that prevents Gam from declaring all-out war in an attempt to settle the question once and for all. Should the stops be lifted, however, his clan's greater numbers would only serve to even the odds against the superior brain power in the Rogues' Council. There would be no quick victory.

3.2 THE ROGUES' CLAN

Strayhold's Clan of Rogues has been building its power for many decades. It now controls the larcenous activity in a number of nearby towns and can offer protection to its operatives throughout most of southern Rhovanion. Possessed of an information-gathering network that runs through many of the free lands between the Misty Mountains and the Sea of Rhun, these brigands make their own laws and maintain their own, shadowy realm. Their agents circulate in all of that region's major towns, where their safeholds are always within reach.

In addition to what work they do for their own profit, the rogues are quite willing to take on contracts for parties willing to pay for their services. The prices are high, but they are confident enough in their ability to deliver and to collect that they are willing to work without advance payment, as long as the employer seems able to pay.

Within Strayhold the clan has an operation that mirrors its activities abroad. There are always tricksters and cutpurses in the streets, muggers in the alleys, and entrymen on the rooftops. The Rogues that work the town are chosen in rotation from the clan. Most members spend three months abroad for each one at home, so the group is ever-changing and no one becomes too well known.

Conul Uld is aware that his clan cannot be too hard on the settlement's folk. Without them the clan-hall would be just a bandit fort soon to be razed by some lord or baron. The townsfolk are his cloak and shield. This restraint is witnessed by Strayhold's residents, who have learned that the loss of a few coins a month is little compared to the taxes they would have to pay in more reputable towns. In the end each benefits from the other, but not without a fair amount of grumbling.

The clan is run by a council of five of the town's most accomplished pilferers, led by the wily old Conul Uld, a tiny man of almost eighty years who has run the clan since most of his fellow councilors were cutting purses in the street. His age has done nothing to soften his disposition; he is hard as nails and few are willing to cross him. The council meets once weekly, with special sessions as Conul Uld sees fit. Each of the five has his area of jurisdiction within the affairs of the clan. Conul Uld attends to the operations within the settlement and keeps an eye on the overall picture.

The muggers and extortionists are supervised by one Hrothgar Ednew. The cutpurses are handled and trained by Allit the Breeze. For the swindlers and anglers there is Mard Neffar and the entrymen have Rillit the Squirrel. Under these hands the clan operates efficiently enough, but not without some conflict between the branches.

CONUL ULD



3.21 CONUL ULD

Born in a brothel and raised in the streets of the Vagabond Settlement, Conul Uld has never had an easy life. He grew up as a cutpurse, working through the clan from the time he was nine. His small stature and an uncanny ability to appear the picture of innocence at any time served to disarm his victims and kept him out of prison. When a mage's purse sprouted a mouth and teeth and deprived him of his good right hand, he turned to running scams and showed even greater skill at misleading his victims than he had at pilfering their wallets.

At the same time, Conul began to take an active part in the clan's politics. His ability to play his peers off against each other and manipulate them towards his own, usually shrewd, opinions made for a rapid rise to power. He was soon the youngest of the Council of Five and overseer of cutpurses. Conul had spent his political

career earning favors and bringing men into his debt and for his first few years on the council he continued to do just that, quietly biding his time as his elders fought each other. Then, when the Master's Chair fell open in his fifth year of office, and his seniors were too vehemently divided against each other for any of them to take the seat it fell to him. He has held the Chair ever since, for almost fifty years, and under him the clan has prospered greatly, benefiting from the subtlety his early years taught to him.

3.22 HROTHGAR EDNEW

The lord of the muggers is as brutal as his business. All the subtlety of Conul Uld has found no answer in this man's mind. As one might expect, his nature gives him little patience for the Master's plans, which aim at long-term returns but often sacrifice immediate gain. He covets the top seat as well, and is not without support from the poorly educated and unthoughtful majority of the clansmen. His attitudes can partly be blamed on his unhappy life. He is from the far South and has lived under the lash of evil. His escape to the North has brought him more sidelong looks at his dark skin than warmth and welcome. Bitterness has been added to his already sullen attitude and he turns his unhappiness outward through the strength of his hands. His present position on the council is not strong, as the other four are all greater thinkers than he. Should Conul Uld fall out, however, this Southron stands next in popularity and could use force of numbers to propel him to the top. That would be an ill day for the clan and for all around them.

3.23 ALLIT THE BREEZE

The trainer and overseer of the clan's cutpurses, Allit is Conul Uld's one true friend. Their relationship began as pupil to teacher in the Master's early days on the council. Allit was a run-away from a passing caravan at the age of eleven. He came under the tutelage of Conul Uld and blossomed quickly into the finest cutpurse in the clan. As he grew older his skills increased, but so did his size. Nearly seven feet at his twentieth birthday, he remains rather hard to miss in a crowd.

Although his skill remained unmatched, Allit's days in the field were numbered. A few brushes with vengeful nobles who could never forget a man of his stature brought the Breeze home to the Shattered Step for good, whereupon he began to teach. By aiding the cutpurses' teacher, no longer Conul Uld by this time, he worked his way into the good graces of the councilors. Conul Uld remembered his deft and clever pupil well and chose to sponsor him when the cutpurse seat came open. Since that time these two have been in unbroken alliance.

3.24 MARD NEFFAR

Mard Neffar, is without a doubt, a man who was made to run a sham. He has lived his life in the streets of Fire Town and prospered by his quick wit. His appearance is perfectly average, somewhat above plain but not pretty, yet he is charged with a magnetism that makes him very easy to believe. He is quite well-spoken and always polite. Within his head, however, he never ceases calculating. Mard sees all angles and never misses a chance to turn a situation to his advantage. In the battles of the council he sees the sense that guides the Master's course, but if things get rough he will be on whatever side comes out on top.

3.25 RILLIT THE SQUIRREL

The Squirrel is the most eccentric of the current councilors. He sees his type of crime as a high art and is in fact a master of it. He is not very concerned with the sway of powers in the clan. So long as he is allowed to teach his art and his pupils are permitted to practice it he is happy. He does not see Hrothgar Ednew as a threat, but tends to side with Conul Uld as one who has proven his ability to give work to the entrymen.

LEARDINOTH



3.3 THE MAGE

Leardinoth is a powerful magician, schooled in the blackest arts. He holds sway over the battling clans of the vagabond town through simple fear. Those who oppose his will in any important matter end up dead, so few are willing to do so. He is not prone, however, to meddle too deeply into the settlement's everyday affairs; he merely moves to counter any major threat to Strayhold' s stability.

This fact does not stop his being bitterly resented by the Strayhold's brigands. Each group feels that if only he were out of the way they could then assume control. The clans fail to understand the extent of his influence. They know that he seems to have an ear in every chamber, and most realize see that his agents always appear regularly to exact their Lord's duties; however none perceive that it is his power that ultimately maintains the balance in Strayhold.

Borrowed from his master, Leardinoth's magic has drawn the people of the town together and protected them from the worst of Rhovanion's unmerciful winters. Indeed, the Mage spared the town from the ravages of the recent plague. Such is the power that the Necromancer lends his servant. Leardinoth has little trouble manipulating a gang of rogues and strays.

3.4 THE NEW MARK

The southern two thirds of Strayhold, the Lower Settlements, are known as the New Mark. This area contains most of the town's "honest" businesses and its streets are known to be somewhat safer than the darker reaches of the maze of ravines farther in. Since many of its quarters are virtually abandoned or occupied only in the winter, however, much of the New Mark has a bleak, lifeless quality.

The two portions of the town are divided by a break in the ground where the land drops about three feet down toward the plains. This drop has been cut into steps all across the town, so it provides no real obstacle to any but the most hurried traveler.

3.41 THE WAGON FOLK

These folk constitute the most recent addition to the settlement. They are the families of Gramuz (Grasslander) refugees ruined by the winter, people who have chosen not to join the life of the settlement proper. Instead, they cling to hopes of returning to their former homes to start over and rebuild their lives. For most this is an idle dream. When they fled their farms and property, all their hard-fought possessions were sold for next to nothing and that money has long since been spent. These impoverished and displaced Northmen reside on the edge of town, where they sell their crafts and labor in hope of saving enough to buy some security. Unfortunately, most actually make only enough to feed their children for one more week.

As might be expected, many of these good people have grown bitter with their state. Though their children laugh and play among the carts, as children will in the darkest times, the adults are often gruff and taciturn. Each year more of the young folk fall in with the rougher breeds of the town dwellers, turning away from their families toward crime. Still, among these people are those who hold dearly to the spark of life and bring their neighbors back to hope, holding folk dances and fairs to relieve the tensions of their everyday lives.

Among the covered carts can be found small stands, set up to sell the simple goods these folk can make. Weaving, wood carving, macrame, and leather work among other things, can be purchased here for very reasonable prices. Their quality is fair, although not as good as what is made in the established shops of the Old Mark. This merchandise sells mostly because of its rustic look and low price.

Some of the kinder folk are also willing to take in travellers for a night or so, if they look trustworthy and seem to be in need. Occasionally, good folk fleeing from one of the clans or some other trouble in town may find sympathy with the wagon folk. In such cases the refugees will be sent to a man called Arcilla, who is the effective leader of the community. He is a good man and a keen judge of character. If the people who come to him are honest and truly in danger, he will offer them aid in the form of a hiding place among his folk until it is safe for them to leave the settlement. Arcilla will not allow his settlement to be used as a base for further ventures into the settlement though, for he will only help those who are trying to leave.

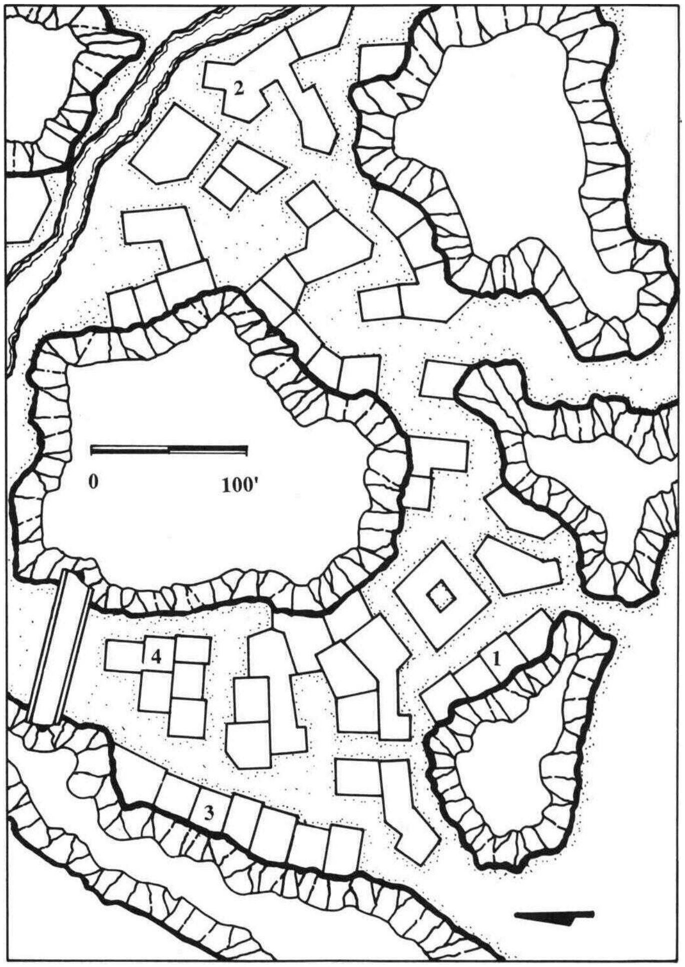
3.42 HANDSCRAFT WAY

Handscraft Way is Strayhold's artisans' quarter. It consists of three blocks of shops, each with living space on the second story. During the town's long business hours, the craftsmen keep shop and call out their bargains to the passers by in the street. Most sorts of goods can be found in one shop or another, and the quality is generally good. The shops' wares tend to be aimed primarily at the traveller trade, so over-decoration and gaudiness are not uncommon. In most of the shops, however, there is a small stock of goods intended for the local market. Where the rich goods are usually quite overpriced, the simpler pieces the craftsmen sell to their neighbors run only a bit higher than normal. Below is a sample of some of the shops to be found along the way. If the players wish to see just any shop the GM may simply choose from this list. If they are looking for something specific, the Way probably has it, but if it is not in one of the shops listed the GM should simply create a new shop along these lines.

NOTE: *The sections that follow, detailing other portions of the settlement, will be handled similarly.*

1. Alfric the Smith. The smithy of Alfric Blackfist stands in the southwestern row of shops in Handscraft Way, between a tanner and an

HANDSCRAFT WAY



outfitter's shop. His specialty is brasswork and a number of very fine pieces fill his shelves. The decorative items are quite lovely and the tools and instruments are excellent. The selection on display runs from a rather gaudy brass and copper statue of an eagle, to impressive miniature clocks, and even a complete set of navigation instruments. The smith does not limit his work to brass, however, and he exhibits several quality swords among his wares. None are worth the price he asks for them (e.g., twenty silver for a crude-to-fair scimitar), but this will not stop his suggesting them and the brasswork on their hilts is very good.

Behind his workbench he also keeps a few items for local consumption. In a box there he has three outstanding sets of Rogues' picks which will add fifteen to any pick locks roll (Normal picks add only five.). He will sell one of these for three silver, though his asking price will be five. He already has buyers for the other two so they will cost five, asking price: seven. He also has a dagger with a hidden compartment in its hilt (-15 to perceive), which he will sell for a gold piece, despite the 15 sp asking price.

Alfric looks just like a smith should, a dark-haired, broad-shouldered

man of middle age. Enamoured of his work, he often whistles tunelessly while he beats his anvil. He runs the shop without help, so customers often have to wait for him to finish a bit of work before being helped. Second to brasswork, there is nothing Alfric enjoys more than arguing prices with a good haggler. If such a contest is handled in a friendly manner he is likely to become quite well disposed towards his customer. He is a good man, but minds his own business. It would take quite a bit to make him get directly involved in any trouble, but should a stranger come asking him for a rush job on a grappling hook, he would not ask whose house was to be robbed. He also knows roughly how the politics of the settlement run and will answer questions about them, so long as the questions seem innocent.

2. Mardoric the Weaver. In the eastern row of the craftsmen's shops near the river is the house of Mardoric the Weaver. The store is hung with a great number of fine robes and lovely blankets, and in the rear is the weaver's loom, a large and complicated affair that Mardoric designed himself. The prices are relatively high; but considering the quality of the goods, they are reasonable — anywhere from one-and-a-half to ten times the cost of the standard item, depending on how fancy it is. In addition to the finery on display, there is a good stock of normal clothing to be had if one should ask. It is hung in the back room, where Mardoric's wife Eomavi does the sewing.

Several special garments are also kept in the back room. To answer the demand produced by the two clans, Mardoric has copied the guard uniforms of several towns and will sell any one for one gold piece. He also has cloaks designed for hiding in shadows which will add +10 to night time hiding rolls and clothes which appear to be ragged and worn, but are actually quite sound. These sell at a price of five gold, plus any fees for required alterations.

The weaver himself is a small man of mixed blood. He works the loom, while his wife sews and his daughter, Lirse, tends the shop. Lirse is very pretty, but her father does not take kindly to men who show interest in her. She handles all normal business but people looking for the items kept in the back room will be referred to Mardoric. The weaver and his wife are rather dour folks who will rarely talk to strangers of anything but business.

Lirse is much more open, however, and her view of life is rather naive and her secret boyfriend has given her a slightly twisted view of settlement politics. He is a young thief and has led her to believe that his clan is the single real power in the town: the strays are just a rabble and the wizard on the hill, a dotard. She holds these convictions deeply and will not listen to other views. Incidentally, anyone being too nosy about the Clan of Rogues will certainly be mentioned to her boyfriend that evening. He's no dummy and will report it immediately to his superiors.

3. Bisc the Tanner. A few shops from Alfric's smithy is the leather shop of Bisc the Tanner. His wares are of fair quality and his prices are not too expensive. As at the other shops the products on display here are, as a rule, highly decorated. In addition to the normal stock of wine skins and horse furniture the shop holds several sets of leather armor and three stout shields of cured hide and wood. Bisc's son, Biscovic, handles the transactions. Still a little young, Biscovic is somewhat susceptible to a quick bit of haggling.

The tanner and his son are both rather politically minded and often try to organize their neighbors to bring pressure on clans to achieve this or that end. As one might suspect, they have little success in such pursuits. The clans are seen by most of the citizens as part of life in Strayhold, and few see any possibility of change. Still, the two leatherworkers will talk at great length to anyone who will listen, about the problems of the town and their solutions for them. Though their points of view tend to show a certain degree of political naivete, they are well informed about the political set up in the settlement. If drawn into the topic, either will gladly voice his opinion that the removal of the Mage will do nothing but bring ruinous civil strife to Fire Town. After sunset, these two can often be found in the near by tavern trying to convince their fellows of the immediate need to unite and throw off the rule of the clans.

4. Eoric the Arborer. In the northern bank of shops is a most unusual shop. It is the shop of Eoric the Arborer. Here, on shelves and stands, are displayed dwarfed trees of all shapes and kinds. Their subtle beauty is unmatched by any of the gaudy crafts of the surrounding shops. The prices are high, from two gold on up, to show the years of patient and delicate care that has gone into each. The youngest trees are in their teens but the oldest is over two hundred years old. This one, an oak of just under three feet, stands in the shop's center, on a sturdy wooden table, and is priced at a little over a hundred gold.

Eoric is an older man of Southron appearance who spends his afternoons quietly tending his plants. He seems serene and calm. There is, however, more to him than meets the eye. Under his loose robes, he is as sturdy as his small oaks. His business here is not merely the selling of trees, for he has settled here to act as eyes and ears for certain members of the White Council. As Eoric works his pruning shears in the open front of his store, he is always listening to the talk of the street. In the evenings he roams from bar to bar, gathering information. This he passes on, through messengers, to the councils of the West. His disposition is such that his service ends with the relay of information.

If he is contacted by good adventurers Eoric will tell them what he can, which is a great deal, and send their messages abroad if necessary. He knows very well how the politics of the settlement run and what would be most likely to happen should the Mage fall; he also knows that the Mage is tied to the Necromancer of Dol Guldur. These things he will tell to any who convince him that they are servants of good with enough sense not to misuse the information. Although Eoric will give them information, he will not fight for them or even hide them in his home. The arborer feels that a man must flow with nature and not fight the forces that would shape him; thus violence, or anything that might lead to fighting, is out of his field. Eoric also keeps in touch with the Seer Ecuris, and if a party that is going to strike against the Mage comes to see him, he will give them a fine steel pruning knife as a gift. *"In case you need one someday."* If they do not visit him, Eoric will try to seek them out to give his gift. Such a knife is needed to take the Mage's life.

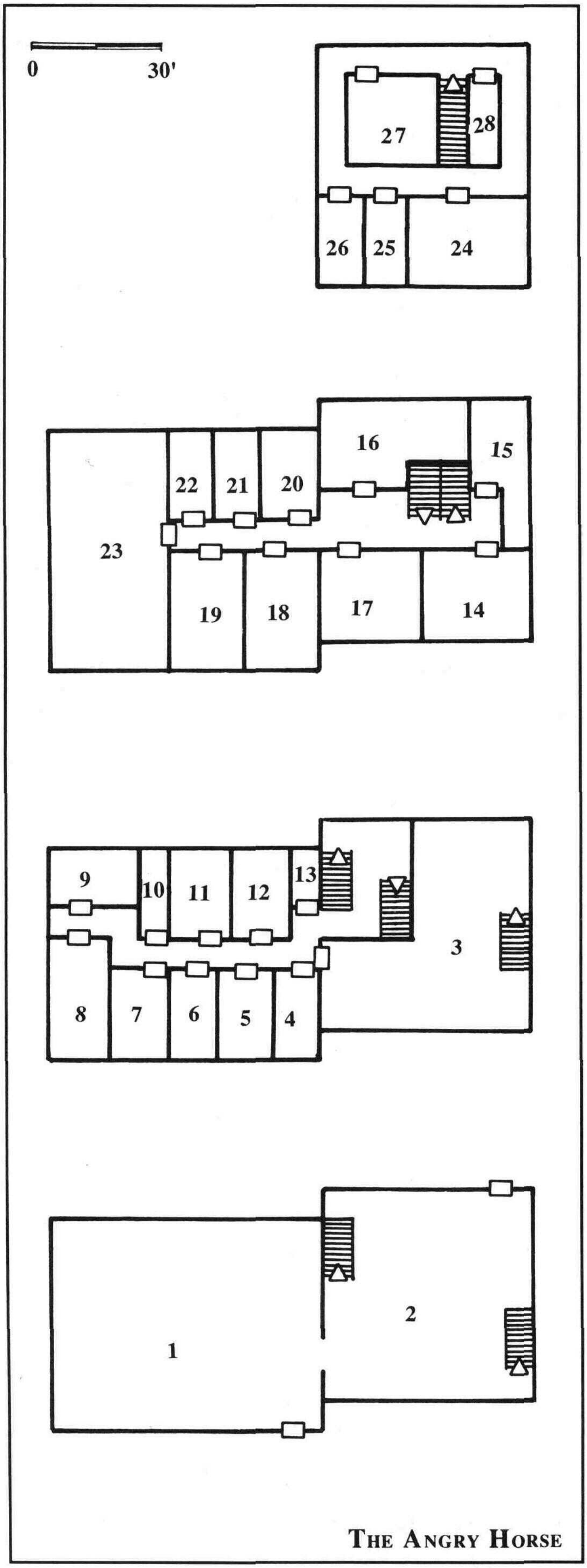
5. Yorl The Trainer. Across the river, just east of Handscraft Way, is the shop of an animal trainer, Yorl of Londaroth. Myriad beasts occupy the cages in his barnlike shop. He trains all sorts of animals, everything from squirrels to great cats. His prices are high, running from twenty silver for a ferret to a thousand for the golden hunting cat that occupies his largest cage. Although even more expensive, he enjoys a good trade by training creatures no other man would dare approach.

The secret of Yorl's success is an inborn power of telepathy. He can speak with the animals as well as he can with his clients. Thus, the commands he teaches them are given straight to them through his mind. This sets up a conditioned response much more quickly and firmly than normal methods. Yorl is not, however, able to alter the nature of his pupil. A cat he has trained will still behave just like a cat; it will simply know the meanings of the requests it ignores. His training merely improves communication between man and beast. The creation of bonds between them is up to the buyer or client.

3.43 THE MARKET

Just in front of the Strayhold is a large collection of wooden stalls built on a flat grassy sward. Three days a week the farmers from the surrounding lands come in to sell their goods, fresh in the Summer and Fall and out of storage in the less productive months of Winter and Spring. Their buyers are both citizens of the town and passing merchants looking for new provisions for their caravans. The sellers and their wares are like those at any farmers' market: the produce is good and the stock is healthy. Good Northman folk come here because it is the closest market, rather than through an affinity with the patrons who buy their goods. The only thing that sets this vending-place apart from any other market is the high percentage of rough customers in the crowd. The chance of finding trouble is as high here as it is anywhere else in Strayhold.

The administration of the market is quietly handled by an old Dwarf known as Gaffnin. His appearance is grizzled and he is almost always cross. He runs a tight and fair operation, however; all goods are brought to his offices in a large building just inside the settlement, to be assessed. He draws a small tariff off the top to keep up the stalls and pay for his staff, four large and brutish men



who keep things orderly among the stalls and make sure Gaffnin's rules are followed. The Dwarf and his men live in the market building, a long one-story shed made of rough planking.

3.44 THE ANGRY HORSE

The Angry Horse is the Strayhold's only reputable tavern. An impressive complex, it stands on the edge of town, its large, fenced yard and stables adjoining a massive main building. The inn itself is built of brick with cheery windows and a wide door.

1.—2. Public Rooms. Diners and drinkers at the Merchant are entertained on the first floor. These rooms are brightly lit and comfortable, with tables and benches to seat a great many patrons. The fare is served by several young men who also serve as stable hands and bell hops. The meals are good, but also quite expensive, priced at about twice normal to keep out undesirables. In room two there are two stairways leading upwards. One goes up to the guestrooms above, the other to the kitchen. Each room also has a large fireplace with a broad hearth and mantle.

3. Kitchen. All of the best in cooking gear is found here. The innkeep, Burhgavia and his wife, Marhsuntha run a clean ship and their kitchen shines. Great brick ovens stand against the back wall for roasting and baking. Several preparation tables run along the room's length and under them, on shelves, are all the tools of the cook's trade. Behind the stairs is the larder which, as one might expect, is quite well-stocked. There is additional space for food storage in the out buildings.

4.—12. Guestrooms. These rooms are of standard quality, sleeping from one to four. Each has two large beds, a writing desk, two wardrobes and a washstand.

NOTE: *If the GM would like to fill out the guestrooms for exploration by a party, he may wish to use the NPCs from Section 2.0 as occupants. A fair number of patrons, however, should be harmless—wealthy travellers, merchants, etc.*

13. Linen Closet. This room holds only shelves of clean sheets and piles of dirty laundry. It is only visited once or twice a day so it will make a good hiding place, if no active search is mounted.

14.—16. Common Bedrooms. The guests who value their money more than their privacy take lodging in these rooms. They are filled with cots, each with a small, locked chest built into it. Lodging in these rooms is only five coppers per night, where the more private rooms run from seven to forty.

17.—19. Guestrooms. These are simply nicer versions of the rooms on the floor below, with more comfortable fittings but generally the same equipment.

20.—22. Guests' Servants' Rooms. These are set up like the common bedrooms down the hall, and are for the servants of wealthier guests.

23. Royal Suite. Though royalty is rare at the Merchant and no king has ever visited, there are occasionally guests with riches enough to call for the luxury this room provides. It holds a separate dressing room and sitting room just off the main bed chamber. The floor is covered with fine rugs. The bed clothes are the finest money can buy. There is a chest, a desk, several chairs, and a sofa of rich, carved wood. The cost of this chamber is forty coppers per night.

24. Employee Bunkroom. This chamber is like the common bedrooms below in its furnishings. There are seven cots.

25. Head Cook's Room. The head cook, Gorlin, is a heavy man of middle age. His chamber is far less tidy than his kitchen, with clothing left all about. It is furnished with a wardrobe, a desk, two chairs, and a large bed.

26. Head Steward's Room. The steward, Vecis Opor, keeps his chamber fastidiously neat. Its furnishings are like those in the cook's room, but not one speck of dust or item is out of place. Some of the decoration reflects the steward's Southron upbringing. On the wall directly across from the door is a hanging of red and black fabric on which is depicted a serpent. The man is actually a spy for the Mage and keeps a close ear to anything of interest that might go on in the inn.

27. Burhgavia's Daughter's Room. Illinith is Burhgavia's pride and

joy. She is a pretty girl, but spoiled rotten. Her room is furnished nearly as well as the royal suite below, with wisps of silk trailing down from the ceiling making it look like the hall of some Southern queen. She has heard of such things from the steward, who is quite smitten by her. Besides the furnishings the room holds a fortune in jewelry, which the girl treats as if it were glass. It is kept in a jumbled chest and the casual observer might assume it to be costume adornment by the lack of care it gets. All together it is worth nearly fifty gold pieces. The girl is flighty and has no real idea that Opor is anything but a kindly man. She has yet to discover romance outside of the tales he tells her of the southlands.

28. The Innkeep's Room. Burhgavia and his wife are simple folk and their room reflects their character. It holds a desk, three chairs, a wardrobe, and a large bed. The furniture is plain wood. The desk has two drawers which hold papers dealing with the maintenance of the inn. The wardrobe is full of the couple's clothing, but has a false bottom under which is Burhgavia's small treasure. The innkeeper has amassed two hundred gold pieces, which he keeps in three leather bags, a cache which indicates just how profitable a business he runs. This fortune, the jewelry in his daughter's room, and the possessions of his guests are kept safe by virtue of a simple rule: the Mage has judged Burhgavia's estabishment off-limits to both clans. Leardinoth's scheme of things requires one safe inn to draw important folk to the town, and the Angry serves as his tool, so long as he has an ear inside. It is a tribute to Burhgavia's naivete that he has never wondered about his unique immunity.

VECIS AND ILLINITH



3.45 FORTUNE SQUARE

In the shadow of the Mage's castle cluster some of the Strayhold's biggest nighttime attractions, the gambling houses. They stand in two rows, off of Fortune Square to the north and the east. These are sturdy buildings of wood which stand two stories tall, with the staff living above the shops, as is true in most of the town's businesses. All sorts of games and contests can be found as one moves from shop to stall; cock fights, dice, cards, anything men can think to place wagers on. The shops run from crowded, open stalls to private clubs with large men just inside their doors to keep out uninvited guests. From early evening to almost dawn the dealers and callers have all the business they can handle. Their clients wander from stall to stall and mill about the crowded streets through all the darkened hours.

1. The Golden Rod. The Golden Rod occupies the westernmost house of the eastern row. It is an open shop, in the center of which stands a large octagonal table. The table's central portion is open, and a bar of golden metal hangs above the center of the area. The bar is suspended from a thin wire, which is attached to the ceiling above an array of eighteen small statues. Shaped like small warriors, the statues are arranged in a complex pattern, with some nearer to the center and some farther out.

Patrons of the Golden Rod place bets on which statues will be upset and in what order when the bar is struck with a light wooden bat. The winner of the greatest sum on each round strikes the bar for the next. The betting is handled by a number of rather large men under the supervision of the owner, a small Northman called Riduimer.

If PCs wish to join this game, it can be simulated with three six-sided dice (3D6). Each possible number (3-18) represents one of the statues. The player can choose as many numbers as he feels will pay, placing a bet on each. The dice should then be rolled along with one ten sided die. Each time a number is generated that statue is knocked down and those who have bet on it win. The rolling should continue until the same number is rolled twice or a number higher than six is rolled on the ten sider, this indicates that the bar has spun up to where it can no longer hit the statues.

There is also a system of odds by which the numbers from 6 to 15 pay only half the bet (e.g., a bet of 2sp gets the bettor his 2sp plus 1 sp), while 4,5,16, and 17 yield an equal return on the amount being gambled. The numbers 3 or 18 will double the return on the wager, these being the farthest out of the targets. If the bets are placed in the order that the statues fall, the gambler's total winnings for that round are tripled.

> **NOTE:** *If a PC has skill in gambling, he may make a D100 roll (adding his bonus) each time he loses a wager. A modified result of 101+ enables the PC to reroll the 3D6.*

***2.* The Bone Juggler.** Located in the middle of the central row, this shop deals in dice games of several types. It is set with several tables where the games are played. The owner, Rewin, is a small man of mixed blood with only one leg. He pays dues to the strays guild and its members often frequent the shop. The games range from straight high rolling on cube shaped dice and a game similar to craps, to a complicated game called Brollist which uses carved slivers of bone, rolled and flipped to simulate warfare. The house charges two coppers for admission, but does no more than supervise the games. Patrons play against each other. Only in Brollist does Rewin take much interest. He is a keen player and will often join into the game if it is lively.

To handle PCs for most of the Juggler's games the GM must simply work with fifty-fifty odds. The games involve no skill so no gambling bonus is applied. The patrons of the shop tend to be rough; any PC who does too well or shows too much mirth in victory may find himself in another sort of trouble. Brollist is more a game of strategy than the rest. To determine the results of a match each player should make five D100 rolls, taking turns around the table.

> **NOTE:** *The GM should remember that this system is a simplification of a much more complex game, so he should describe it accordingly. For instance, rolls should signify martial results: with high rolls depicting events like "Horsemen on high ground" or "Two Dragons over head," and low rolls denoting things like "Wains burned" or "Footmen routed."*

When five rolls are made they are averaged to find the winner. The game is even better if the players' gambling skills are added to the final averages. The typical player will have a skill of -25 or +5. Rewin has a skill bonus of +55, but he only chooses to play against very good players.

3. The Feathered Wing. Located at the western end of the gambling quarter, the Feathered Wing operates behind a closed door. The sign outside depicts a wing whose feathers are marked with numbers and symbols. Inside the gamblers are almost silent, sitting around odd-shaped tables, holding hands full of paper feathers, spread like fans. The feathers are marked on one side like those on the sign outside and are black on the other.

The chamber's decorum is enforced by the huge Southron who owns the place. His name is Orbul, but he speaks very little of any tongue besides his own Apysaic. Ostensibly fluent in Westron and the local Eothrik dialect, he prefers to remain apart from the townsfolk. Few know him as more than an imposing outsider. Still, Orbul is friends with Hrothgar Ednew of the Clan of Rogues and many rogues of Hrothgar's faction spend time at the Wing. As at the Juggler, the games here are played between the guests, with Orbul taking only a two copper admission fee.

REWIN



These games are played with cards or slats of painted wood. Each can be simulated with cards or dice, using gambling bonuses. To represent a night's gambling using only one roll, the GM should first ask the player how much of his funds he will commit and whether he would like to be conservative or aggressive. In the former case, a percentile roll will break down as follows: 1-15 = total loss; 16-40 = half loss; 41-60 = break even; 61-85 = gain half; 86-100 = double money. In the latter case 1-30 = total loss; 31-50 = half loss; 51-65 = break even; 66-80 = gain half; 81-90 = double money; 91-96 = gain one and a half; 97-99 = triple money; 100 = quadruple money. As in the Juggler there will be men present of all skill levels so the GM must also decide the level of the PCs' opponents and use their bonuses to subtract from the PCs'.

4. The White Purse. In the center of Fortune Square stands a sturdy building built of wood but painted a garish gold. This is the gambler's tavern, the White Purse. It has two serving areas. The east wing is a normal tavern with benches and tables for its patrons. The west has no space to sit, being designed for the customers who wish to get right back to their gambling. The two halves share a kitchen which is set in the crux of the buildings L shape. It produces some of the best food found within the town.

Upstairs are rooms for the weary. They are usually taken by folk who are too drunk to go home, so most are not luxurious. All but four are simple common rooms with bare cots. The remaining chambers are more comfortable, aimed at the occasional sober guest who cannot afford the cost of the Merchant or the risks of Grilic's. These are simply but nicely furnished, with bare wood chests, wardrobes, and comfortable beds.

The White Purse is run by a young Gondorian called Mirnil. Born of a rich family, Mirnil has been labeled a black sheep and has come here to live free of his family's eyes. He still receives a considerable allowance, which subsidizes the taverns earnings and lets him keep prices low. The tavern provides him enjoyment, and Mirnil is rarely concerned about earning a profit. While he moves among his drinkers, his face shines as encourages them to live it up and have a good time.

5. Ricaric Breten the Lender. Ricaric Breten's establishment lies just south of Fortune Square. Tucked in a small block of shops crowded into a narrow street, it serves as Strayhold's most enduring money exchange. Ricaric the Lender lives primarily off of unfortunate gamblers, but he is willing to consider almost any venture.

Among other things, he maintains a pawn shop. Customers receive a discounted fee and leave their wares as collateral. The items remain with Ricaric until they are redeemed, or the date comes for their resale. If the money (with interest) is not returned by this time, the goods are sold. Ricaric lends only to local citizens, who he will stand a good chance of finding should the payment come overdue. His interest rates are high — twenty to forty percent—and he will say straight out that default is always fatal.

The Lender's office is dominated by a large desk and several chairs. His cash is kept in a heavily locked back room and protected by monthly payments to the Clan of Rogues. Two huge thugs (4th level warriors), who usually lounge around his establishment, watch over his guests.

6. The Rogues' Word. Near the Moneylender's shop stands the bookshop of Midmin Parsel. Inside, every horizontal surface is stacked with books of all sizes and colors. A large black and white cat called Hildwine stalks among them and eyes any customers with practiced disinterest. Behind and above the sea of tomes is a complex, dusty, brass contraption made of rings and mesh spheres set upon a pedestal of wrought iron. The bookseller claims that this peculiar device can chart the movements of the stars and help astronomers and astrologers calculate and predict the arrangements in the heavens. His boast cannot be backed up though, because he has no idea where to begin the recalibration that would be needed to start the thing up. It has not run for many years. Still, it is quite a conversation piece and/is impressively constructed.

Midmin is a wiry old man with a twinkle in his eye and a jump in his step. He enjoys the excitement of life in Strayhold and will sit for hours telling tales of daring exploits of history's greatest robbers. With these same tales, told in the Sign of Romendacil, he has endeared himself to many members of the Clan of Rogues. Now he often has a young apprentice or two about his shop listening to him speak as he dusts off his merchandise. His popularity among the rogues is not mere luck. He has cultivated it carefully, the better to keep tabs on them.

Midmin, like Eoric the Arborer, gathers information for the cause of good in Middle-earth. When the wise come to the town, his is another shop they visit. The bookseller is even more reluctant to extend himself than Eoric. For him the battles are to be fought by younger men; he simply handles information. Of this, however, he tends to have a great deal. His is the only bindery in the region and both guilds keep old records bound into volumes. This gives him ample opportunity to review the works as he puts covers on the pages.

In addition, the Mage, who rarely appears in the town's streets, has come down more than once to look over the stock. He sees the bookseller

as a fellow intellectual, rare in these parts, and will speak with him as he wanders the store. Midmin is willing to chat at length with his patron about whatever subject they find interesting, he is quite well read, but he will speak only guardedly about anything dealing with local politics and events unless he sees some sign that his guests are on an errand of good. He does this to cover his position, he pretends to know least about that which he studies in the greatest depth — the goings on within the town.

7. Grilic's. At the eastern end of Fortune Square, stands a large, squat, two-story tavern. This is Grilic's. It is named for a barkeep whose face has long since passed from memory and the establishment is now run by a sturdy woman of middle-age called Tamarin. The building is made of field stones and mortar, with a roof of thick, grass thatch. Its common rooms and kitchens stay open day and night to serve the rough clientele.

On the second floor are rooms for guests which may be let by the day, the month, or the hour. The food is fair and much more reasonably priced than what is served at the Merchant a few hundred feet away. The rooms are also reasonably priced, but the house as a whole is not terribly clean and there is no guaranty that one will not wake to find uninvited guests admiring his possessions. All in all, the inn is not the best or the safest in town — it loses on both scores to the Angry Horse. Grilic's is, however, a good place to listen for gossip and get a feel for the town itself. Most of the settlement's natives prefer it to its more expensive competitor, and Tamarin, and Grilic's staff stay quite busy.

3.46 NIGHTSINGERS WAY

Nightsingers Way is undoubtedly the most sordid area in any town located in western Rhovanion. Contrary to the laws of the Dunedain and Northmen, merchants around this square traffic in human flesh. This is predominantly taken up with the brothels along the way to Flagon Lane, but once a month the slave market opens and folk gather to sample the unparalled wares. Although many are debt-slaves, which are permitted in Northman tradition, others are war-captives or the offspring of slaves. Whatever their origin, however, they yield good (albeit fair) prices and attract buyers from all over Rhovanion.

Such popularity is found, of course, only in certain circles. Among the more upstanding people of Middle-earth almost nothing is known of the market. This is due to the fact that except on market day the building is shut, and no advertisements adorn its outer walls. Then, when sale time rolls around the auction takes place in the buildings central courtyard and only invited guests are admitted. Invitations go mostly to established customers, but careful words in the taverns of Flagon Lane will sometimes help a buyer gain admittance. Entry into the slave market, though, carries considerable danger; for many of the local mercenaries frown on the slave trade and an incautious visitor should always be prepared to face their rude wrath.

1. The Slavers' Market. In the shape of a distorted pentagon, this wooden building holds one of the most dangerous groups in the Strayhold. They are not as powerful as the larger guilds, but their business is more insidious by far. The beautiful or strong of body that come to the Shattered Step without protection or power run a grave risk of being captured and brought to the auctioneer's block.

The mogul of the flesh sellers is a Southron called Marj a'Pur, a surly man that hides a cruel sort of genius behind his swarthy features. Ruthless in his business, he trusts no one whom he does not own. Marj sees everyone as his tools, and his guard of twenty eunuch warriors enforce his harsh edicts. Half these Haradan servants tend his slaves, who are locked within the market building, while the other ten protect his home in the Upper Town.

The market building itself holds a maze of stalls and pens where the merchandise is kept from month to month awaiting sale. The cages will hold anywhere from ten to two hundred slaves of all descriptions, depending on the time of month and on how the month has been for capturing new slaves. Of these, a small percentage will be warriors of various degrees of skill while most will be laborers and a few will be harem slaves of great beauty and of both sexes.

At the building's center is a pentagonal courtyard where sales take place. It can be entered through three of the four doors that open onto it. The fourth is for the entrance for the slaves that are to be sold and lets only into their pens. The three others are on the southern three walls and come through dark corridors from the three large exterior doors that line the southernmost wall of the building's perimeter. The yard is set with bleacher seats around a large platform where the slaves are displayed.

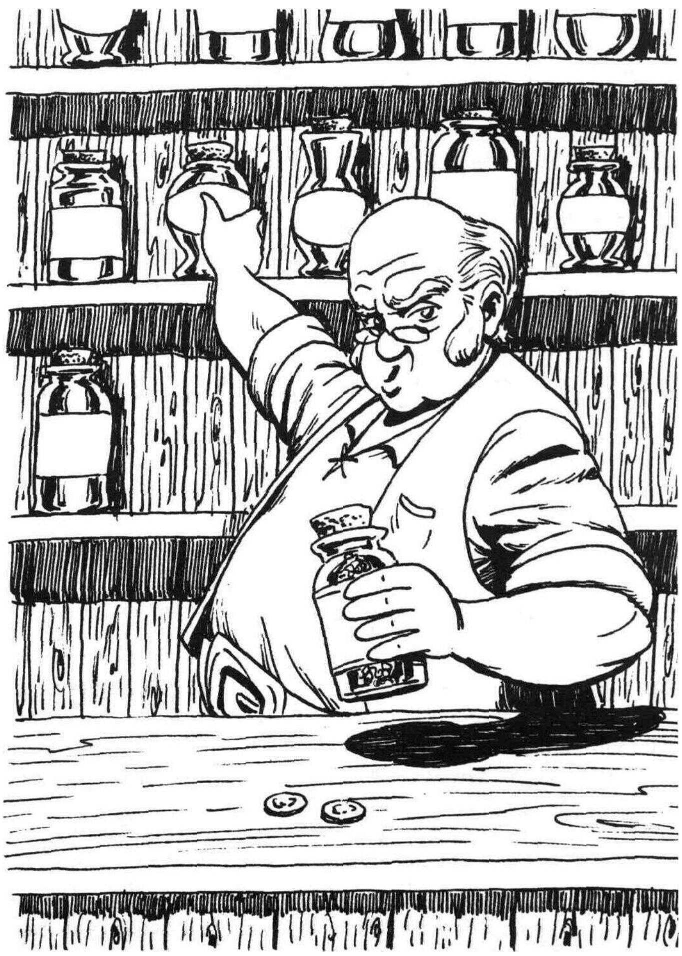
2. The Brothels. The brothels of Nightsingers Way are all of a kind. They are not particularly clean or comfortable and their employees, both male and female, are rarely of any great worth. They run business fairly because so many of their clients are backed by one of the guilds and would find ways to avenge any improper treatment.

The prices run from five bronze to five silver, depending on the tastes and preferences of the patron. Each house has several private rooms, and a few larger rooms for more adventurous customers or groups. There are wardens in all of the shops, warriors who keep things quiet. Generally, their reputation for rough handling of troublemakers tends to prevent too much unruly behavior.

3. Wartik the Herbalist. One unlikely tenant of Nightsingers Way is the town's only herbalist, Wartik. He attributes his shop's location to an ancestor who opened the store selling aphrodisiacs. Now, however, he carries all varieties of herbs in his large, one-story building, which also holds his home. His prices are fair, but they depend greatly upon an herb's availability.

> NOTE: *For game purposes the availability of any given herb can be decided by using the table in MERP or Character Law/ Campaign Law as if attempting to locate each dose. For any herb of which he has less than three doses, Wartik will add twenty percent to the listed price. Furthermore, the price of any herb native to a Glacier, Underground, or Volcanic region will have its original price doubled.*

WARTIK THE HERBALIST



The little Northman is very stubborn and he will usually lose interest in trading with any customer who tries more than once to haggle with him. His position as the towns only herbseller affords him this luxury.

3.47 LUCK'S ALLEY

Luck's Alley is located to the west of Nightsingers Way. A bizarre collection of stalls, it is the charm and trinket capital of Rhovanion. The stores are narrow and crowded together, though built on the same two-story model as is found in the rest of the town. Bursting forth from the shops' open fronts is a vividly colorful and wildly varied array of baubles, beads, and talismans which dazzles the eye. Each shop has its own character and, perhaps, its own favored sort of charm, brooches or amulets.

The proprietors will make almost any claim as to the power of their goods, but show a surprising reluctance to have any sort of magical evaluation techniques used within their shops and never offer any guarantees. In fact, the vast majority of the items offered are completely useless, except as toys to bring peace of mind. At any given time, though, there will be four or five enchanted pieces (which will usually range from +5 to +25, depending on circumstance). Invariably billed as twice or three times as powerful as they actually are, the magic items of Luck's Alley are both elusive and expensive. Despite the dearth of bargains, however, the quarter serves as an ideal spot to sell one's wares without attracting unwanted attention.

3.48 THE WOODMEN'S MARK

The smells of carpentry hang heavily in the air along this street which houses the town's Woodman-dominated builders guild. The sturdy buildings that run both sides of the way are filled with lumber, tools, and work rooms throughout their ground floors. The workers homes occupy the upper stories of these often-elaborate structures.

Unfortunately the guild, which represents the town's only honest work for heavy laborers, has fallen on hard times. But for the constant demand for relumbering Strayhold's corduroy streets, their business is slumping. Fire Town is filled with buildings, many of which are abandoned, and there is little call for new construction. As a result, the members of the builders guild rely on repair work. Times are hard and more and more of them are moving into other, less reputable, professions.

3.5 LAYOUT OF THE OLD MARK

The area known as the Old Mark contains about one third of the city's territory. Although the lower two thirds are by no means tame, this Mark offers even more dangers for the uninitiated visitor. The Old Mark is home to the two powerful brigand-clans as well as a large number of mercenaries and professional slaymans. It is not a place for a casual evening stroll.

3.51 MYSTICS HOLLOW

In a narrow niche in the city's Western wall is the home of a community of fortune tellers. The only area of the Old Mark which is commonly frequented by travellers, the Hollow is crowded with huts and shanties instead of the sturdier buildings of the other sections of town. These are considered more suitable homes for prophets and seers. After all, wisdom is said to come through deprivation. The majority of the Hollow's folk are as fraudulent as the shopowners of Lucks Alley, but they have a skill at saying the words that their clients wish to hear and so, can earn a decent living.

1. The Hovel of Ecuris. Ecuris (see section 5.2.) erected his tiny shack at the northern end of the westernmost row. It is made of rough planks and sealed with clay daubing. Here he greets his patrons just as do the seers around him, with cryptic words and curious deeds. Ecuris also wanders the streets of the town more often than his neighbors, however, gathering information for his more important mission in the City, the promotion of the cause of good. His pre-occupation with this duty keeps his clientele limited. This is as he wishes it. He is a fortune teller only as a cover and, though he does have power, he never wastes it on the whims of passing strangers. If, however, someone on a mission of good should happen across the hovel, the prophet's prescience will usually alert him and the visitor may be given some bit of helpful information.

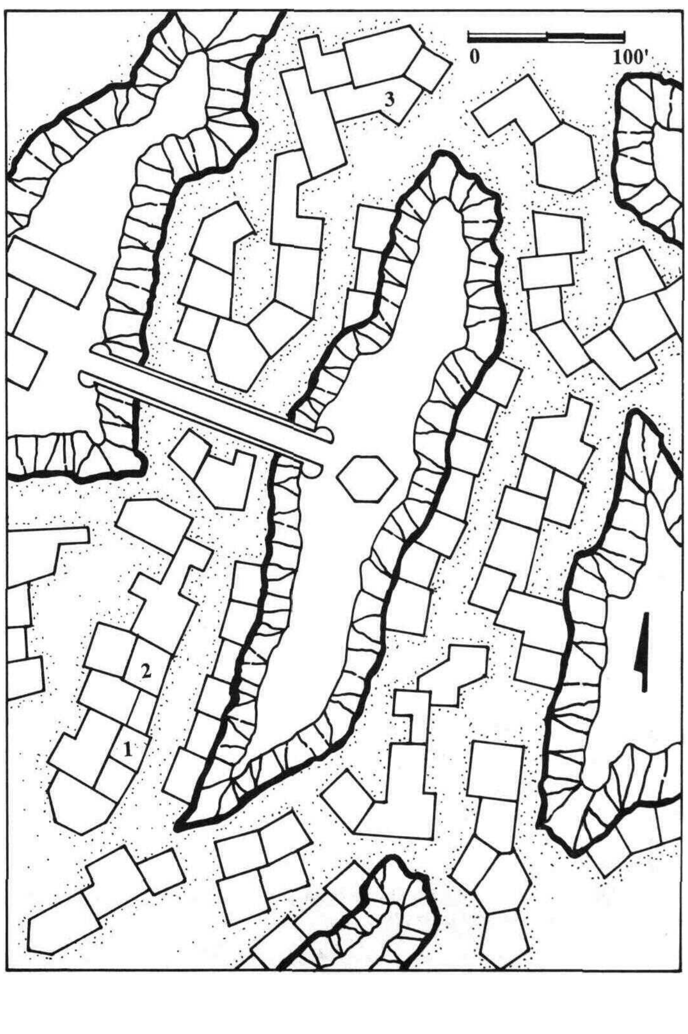
2. Marhforn Reth. Strayhold's only other true seer, Marhforn Reth, resides in a hut at the south end of the westernmost row of the Hollow. Her temperament matches her fiery red hair, but she remains popular with the travellers who come to Buhr Waldlaes. This can be attributed to the fact that her predictions always come true. Her fee is high, but it is only her temperament that stops her predictions from deciding the fates of all Middle-earth.

Marhforn is as fickle as the day is long and chooses by her whim whether she will answer any question asked her. If she says no, no coaxing will change her mind. More than one lord has traveled weeks to hear her, only to be brushed aside for the sake of a farm lad who has questions about his sweetheart. For this reason, she is no longer sought by the powerful of Middle-earth. Marhforn finds their questions dull and, snubbing them, turns instead to the intrigues and romances of more normal life.

3.52 FLAGON LANE

The wildest quarter of the Old Mark, Flagon Lane is as rough any row of taverns in Middle-earth. The patrons are men of the two clans, mercenaries from Loose Jacks Row, and slaymans and torturers from the Shadows. Each pub has its own character which shows in its decorations and draws its particular clientele.

FLAGON LANE



1. The Sands of Harad. The Sands of Harad lies near the southern end of the lane. Its sign, a swinging panel supporting a tent of black and red silk, denotes the tavern as unique. Unlike most drinking halls in Strayhold, the Sands is imbued with decorations and the refreshments that suggest the atmosphere of Far Harad.

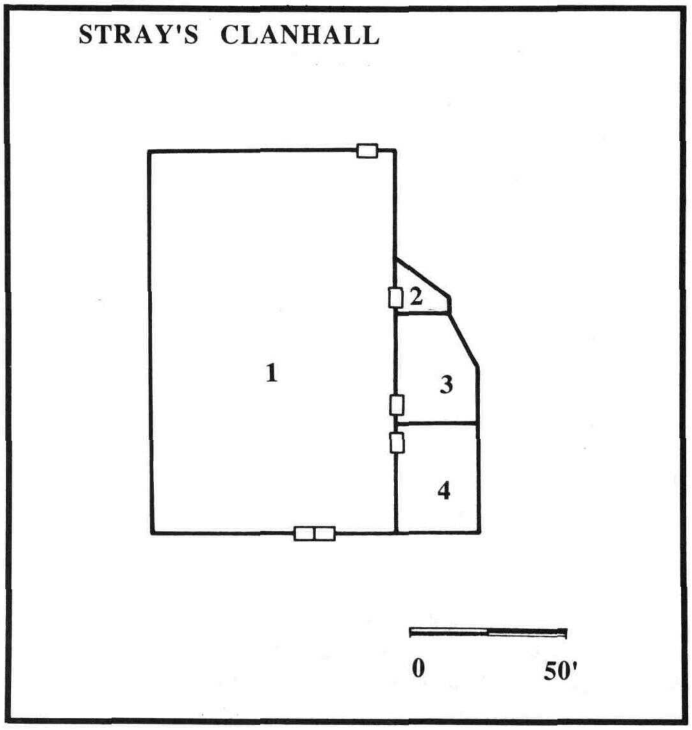
Kub Nara runs this magnificent tavern. The folk to whom he caters are mercenaries from the more reputable bands. They enjoy the light and festive reception, a place where lively music and spritely dancers entertain customers throughout the evening. The drinkers tend to be friendly and gregarious, and no place in Flagon Lane is more suited to those seeking a safe refuge or some form of aid. Locals find the hanging silks and burning braziers of the Sands quite comforting, even though the noise and infectious celebration may seem disconcerting.

2. The Black Kine. Two doors up from the happy lights of the Sands is a rather different watering hole, The Black Kine. An Easterling of Sagath heritage, a man called Kav Gorka, runs the place and he keeps it calm and quiet. Its decoration calls to mind an outpost on the Steppes of the East. The men who gather here are taciturn and hard; few respond well when the atmosphere of their retreat is broken. Strangers are rarely evicted, but at the same time they are never welcome. Each man here has troubles of his own and has little care to take on those of another. New guests are advised to tread act carefully.

3. Ennerling's Web. Named for a Great-spider of southern Mirkwood, the lane's northernmost tavern is also its roughest. Its patrons are a surly gang of rogues and soldiers who gather to drink and fight. The owner, Lorthis, is a sturdy Northman who joins in the frequent fights much more often than he chooses to keep the peace. Fortunately, the furniture is stoutly built and, for the most part, nailed-down. New guests are rarely able to make the trek to the bar before they have been challenged in some way, but those who handle themselves well are usually allowed to dine or talk in peace — at least for a while.

3.53 THE STRAYS' CLAN-HALL

The Strays' Clan-hall sits astride a gap between two of the Strayhold's hills. Built from rough stone blocks of black and gray, it has no windows. Aside from the smokeholes that punctuate the roof, the arrow-slits set high in the walls on both ends of the hall provide the only ventilation. The Clan-hall's roof is of tarred timber, a safeguard against the danger of fire.



Each end of the hall has a sturdy wooden set of double doors, which have been rudely carved to depict the strays plying their mean trade. The square in front of this hall, where the Strayhouse stands, usually holds two or three knots of strays talking, fighting, or gambling. At least two of these strays will actually be on guard duty, watching the street for any suspicious individuals. Late at night the two guards will often be the only folk around, although they will still make pretense of having other business. The fear of Gam insures that these guards are rarely slack in their duties. There is only one chance in a hundred that both guards will be asleep or away at any given time.

Inside, the Clan-hall is as rough as the men who go there. It smells of sweat and beer and is always filthy, with food scraps pushed into the corners and left to rot.

1. The Hall. The meeting hall is a huge room and takes up the majority of the building. It is full of benches and tables of rough wood, carved with the initials of traveling strays from all over western and central Endor. The stone floor is covered with straw, which soaks up the spills.

Once or twice a week, as Gam sees fit, the clansmen gather here to hear him speak. Such events are not official feasts, but few of the strays fail to bring along a snack and a bit to drink so the evenings usually end up in disorder. Credentials are not checked at the door, so nonmembers who desire to can attend these meetings. However, any who do not look like strays may find themselves the object of unwanted attention. Trouble could follow unless they can explain their presence well enough to please the men around them. The strays need little excuse to treat such guests unkindly.

> **NOTE:** *The doors to rooms 2-4 are fastened with locks which are hard (-10) to pick. The keys to these, as well as the single key to the two exits, are carried by the clerk on a ring on his belt.*

2. The Scribe's Bunk. A little man called Oric Galabas serves as the Scribe of the Clan of Strays. Mild but adept at foreseeing the whims of the low-clan's lord, he has attended to all of the strays' business for many years. Gam makes broad decrees and leaves Oric to implement them.

Oric Galabas spends his nights secluded in this small chamber. It holds a bed of plain wood, a wash stand with a porcelain bowl, a wardrobe, and a small chest. A mirror, razor, bar of soap, and a pitcher of water occupy the washstand.

In the wardrobe hang several robes, tunics, and boots, and shoes lie along its floor. The chest is locked with a medium (+0) lock, and is trapped with a poisoned needle (a 5th lvl Reduction variety called Zaganzar). The trap is hard (-10) to spot and very hard (-20) to disarm. Several items occupy the chest: a bag of thirty silvers, a letter, a short sword, and a tiny phial of black glass.

The letter is written in the Black Speech of Mordor and, if translated, will show that Oric Galabas is actually a spy for the Dark Lord, in contact with the Mage. The phial holds a Teleport spell (see Mage *Lofty Bridge* list) which will take whoever breaks it directly to Dol Guldur (see *Southern Mirkwood,* Section 7.5, Location 2 of Level 7). The silver and the sword are normal.

3. Meeting Hall. There is no council in the Clan of Strays, but occasionally Oric Galabas will meet with some of the leading members (or even outsiders) to discuss policy and revenue. It holds a round table and twelve reasonably comfortable chairs.

4. Chamber of Records. Here the clerk keeps the scanty records of the clan and receives those who have business with him. The chamber holds a bookshelf with a few leather-bound volumes on it, a large desk with a chair, three armchairs, and a glass fronted case. The books are Oric Galabas's ledgers for the present year. Last year's have already been discarded. Gam is not a stickler for records. On the desk there is always a clutter of papers, ink bottles and pens, and the remains of the clerk's last meal. The papers simply cover the clan's most recent business and will be of little use to anyone besides Oric Galabas, as he uses his own code-like shorthand to keep the books.

3.54 THE STRAYHOUSE

This large structure is built of timber from Mirkwood and roofed with wooden shingles. It has large, double doors on all four of its faces and glassless windows with wooden shutters run all around it. In summer it is kept open and airy, but with winter the shutters are locked down and the doors are closed.

The building acts as communal home to all of the strays whenever they are in town and as their dining hall. On any given day about twenty to thirty strays will be in residence, eating, lounging or sleeping for the most part, though some will be working the streets as well. The strays enjoy a rough fellowship amongst themselves, but few have patience with normal folk who show too much interest in their affairs.

1. The Galley. Here the strays' meals are made and the tables and benches on which they eat are stored, folded and hung from the walls. There is one long preparation table running down the room's center and on either side of it are two great fire pits with grills and spits. A rotating group staffs the kitchen.

2. The Armory. Rack upon rack of spears, bows, and shields fill this area. It has been designed to facilitate arming a large number of men quickly. The doors both let onto an isle between a counter and the racks of shields. When the clan takes arms, several men hand out weapons from behind the counter as the strays file through.

3.55 THE WARM NIGHT

The safest location within the Old Mark is an brothel known as The Warm Night. Accommodating a fine tavern, it is far cleaner and more respectable than the shops of Nightsingers Way. Guests of the Angry Horse frequent this two story brick building, a magnificent structure with a roof of split pine shingles. Halls with rooms let off from a comfortable parlor where the owner sees to business over a polished wooden counter. The employees do not call out their windows, hawking their wares, as do their competitors across town. It is a quiet and proper establishment.

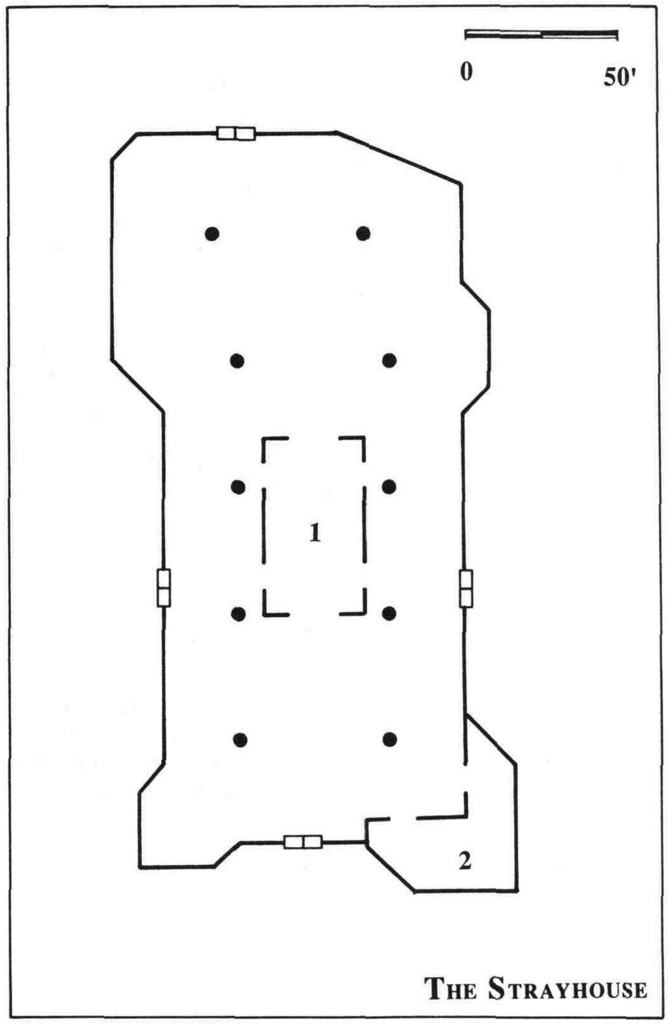
The proprietor is a man out of the East known as Yoltis. Stern, his prices are high and firm. However, his regular clients find no reason to complain, since the services rendered are always satisfactory. To keep up his reputation, he is also careful of the sorts with whom he will deal. Even wealth will not gain a grizzled thief entrance.

3.56 THE SHADOWS

The Shadows lies in a remote corner of Buhr Waldlaes. An isolated, dead-end street, it is never crowded. At night it is as quiet as a burial ground, for death looms in the smokey air that fills the hollow. Its cave-holds and dark, stone buildings have an ominous quality, for they are the abodes of the Northman Cult of the Passing, the men associated with burial rituals, gravemaking, and the like. Necessary but shunned, the cult members keep to their own quarter.

The Cult of Passing, however, is hardly a simple tradesmen's alliance. Besides having their own peculiar subculture, the cult serves as the focus of a number of covert low-clans. One such group, the Clan of Slaymen, is essentially a group of murderers. They exact retribution on behalf of folk who have not been paid the proper headprice (Rh. "Wuirprik"), or who have some need for an assassination or vengeful killing.

The slaymen that are found here share one principle: they ask no questions regarding the nature of their customer. Their only concern is that their victims must be eligible for such a slaying under Northman customs. Any man who has committed, or is responsible for, an act which might justify revenge is eligible as a target. Slaymen are disinterested in the politics.



There are, however, practical barriers that they carefully respect. The Mage has forbidden the slaymen to act on behalf of the low-clans or guilds, restricting them to killing for reasons rooted in blood-disputes or economic revenge. In addition, the Cult of Slaymen will never undertake a task which threatens their own association.

A row of buildings serves as the home of the slaymen. While ruthless and deadly, they tend to be a quiet, dour breed while pursuing their daily chores, men and women who are virtually indistinguishable from other folk when they are out on Flagon Lane or Nightsingers Way. Wise men, of course, know better.

3.57 RED BREAK

Here, the Strayhold's wealthiest residents live in well-built, comfortable, red-brick row houses. Leaders of the low-clans and other brigand brotherhoods, prosperous brothel and tavern owners, and a few mercenary captains live here in high style. While their exteriors are almost identical, each house is unique in its furnishings and decor. Each owner has outfitted his home to match his own desires. As a general rule, however, they are well protected against rogues and such, with strong locks and decorative but functional bars upon their windows. Most contain at least one escape route, if nothing else a small back door which lets onto a hidden alley running behind the row.

3.58 LOOSE JACKS ROW

Mercenaries throughout the Wilderland come to Loose Jacks Row in hope of securing work and information. The stewards of some twenty warrior bands occupy the small structures that line this quiet street. Each group boasts of its involvement in numerous campaigns in and near Rhovanion. Their standards hang outside the doors of their chambers and serve as invitations to those in need of weapons or witchery.

A packed-grass green measuring twenty by sixty feet forms a common about halfway down the row. Known as Jacks Arena, this plot is where the mercenaries settle their personal differences or enjoy a playful scuffle. Four or five times a week, a crowd will gather here to watch and bet on some sort of duel. Spectators cheer their favorites and call to each other for odds. As often as not, the fighters themselves will also have a stake in the betting; but if the loser dies, his bets are considered paid and the victor alone is entitled to the poor sod's personal effects.

1. The Grass-hawks. The office of the Grass-hawks is located in the third building from the north end of the row. Their gilded eagle standard is a Northman symbol. They are led by Fruhiri, a large and ugly old member of the Anthars clan, the westernmost of the six clans of Northman horsefolk. His warriors will fight for any side, in any battle, so long they do not cross arms with their blood kin.

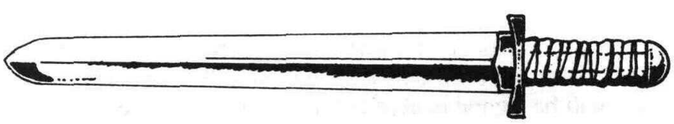
2. Partila's Reavers. Two doors down from the Grass-hawks' is Partila's headquarters. This unpleasant Eodar Northman and his men show their favor toward more wealthy clients and have few scruples. Partila's office walls are adorned with the controversial signs of his trade: two broken Elvish helms, and a Dwarven battle-axe, among other exotic pieces. Quick to take offence, Partila looks unfavorably upon those who comment on his decorations, and he makes frequent trips to the Arena.

3. Rult's Freemen. At the southern end of the row is the desk of the Freemen. Tough, freed slaves, they fight under a banner of white and gold. The standards of the Haradrim, Easterlings, and various Orc groups cover their walls. Their leader, Rult, is a dynamic man of Dunadan and Haradan blood. His magnetic personality and strong, weathered face make him the most popular of Strayhold's mercenary captains. He has a strong sense of honor, and will not fight for a cause that he does not see as just. Still, he is too old for idealism, and he never works cheaply.

3.59 THE ROGUES' MARKET

Otherwise a group of deserted wooden stalls, the Rogue's Market comes alive on the morning following every full moon. It is a market run by the Clan of Rogues, where a wide assortment of stolen wares may be bought at highly discounted prices. What can be found at any particular opening can never be predicted, but enough people are sure that there will be something worth buying that business days are always crowded. The sales are watched over by rough clansmen, who keep their patrons honest; and even rogues are not permitted to steal within the market.

> **NOTE:** *For the handling of the fair the GM must use his discretion. The availability of powerful items and such should, of course, be limited to preserve the balance of the particular campaign. Gems, jewelry, crafted items, high quality weapons, armor, etc. can be let out more freely. The prices are somewhat low, but nothing will be given away. Nobody but the rogues are getting rich at this market.*



4.0 EXCURSION TO THE CITY OF STRAYS

This adventure centers around a shopping trip of sorts. A wealthy scholar, Arcle Terrin of Dol Amroth, has come to the tavern of Meke Larnis, the Barley's Yield, to find a few young fellows to run an errand for him. His studies have revealed to him that a tome of some value to his research is in the hands of a bookseller in the Fire Town. He feels that he is too respectable to go and buy it himself so he wishes to hire someone to make the journey for him. He is a generous man and is offering good pay, twenty gold, which he will even give in advance if the party seems trustworthy.

4.1 THE TALE

The book Arcle Terrin seeks can be found in the shop of Midmin Parsel which stands in a row of stores on the alley that connects Fortune Square and Flesh Merchants Street, between a money lender and an animal trainer. It is a collection of poems by one Ess Pertinil who lived in Dol Amroth some five hundred years ago. The scholar and the bookseller have already agreed on a price through letters and it will be a simple matter for the players to make the transaction.

The difficulties, the danger, and the fun of the mission will come from simply passing through the city's streets. The PCs will find a strange, new world to roam about in. The gambling halls, shops, and taverns of the city can provide a great deal of entertainment. The citizens are a rough and ready crew, always happy to drink, play, or fight with strangers. The streets are full of rogues who can readily detect a heavy purse and ruffians who enjoy being rude to young adventurers. If the party has any spirit the town should be lively indeed.

4.2 THE NPCs

The people of Meke Larnis are of Northman stock. Most are farmers and hardy country folk. The citizens of the Strayhold are a more mixed breed, with almost every mannish line of Middle-earth represented and some other races as well. Following are details for a few who figure prominently in this adventure. The bookseller is described with his shop in section 3.45.

4.21 ARCLE TERRIN

The scholar is a relatively uninteresting fellow unless one is particularly fond of old poetry. He is a good man, though. He is trusting and generous but can be a bit haughty, thinking himself to be above many things which most people deal with day to day.

His quiet life in Dol Amroth suites him well. He is healthy enough, if a bit over-weight, and his tan skin would indicate that he does some of his reading out of doors. His hair is dark and well groomed and he wears his clothing well tailored and fancy.

Notable Skills*: ReadRunes 65, UseItem 55.* ***Languages:*** *Westron 5, Rohirric 4, Adunaic 5, Sindarin 4.*

4.22 VELLSER ORLIT

This young warrior is just passing through the Fire Town on his way to the cities of Gondor in search of work. He is bright and strong and his head is full of high ideals. It is his custom to take the side of anyone he sees in need. This may someday get him in trouble, but for now he will simply act as a tool for the GM should he wish to help the players out of a jam.

Drawn from Northman stock, Vellser has long blond hair and piercing blue eyes. He wears rigid leather armor and carries a broadsword at his hip. His face is quick to smile and his nature is

friendly. At present he is staying at Grillick's tavern but he wanders the city's streets through most of his waking hours as he waits for a caravan heading south with which he might sign on as a guard.

Notable** Skills: Public Speaking 20.* ***Languages: *Westron 5, Sindarin 3.*

4.3 THE SETTING

This adventure's setting is the whole of the Strayhold, though it will probably focus on the lower half of the town. A general description of the city is found in section 3 as is one of Meke Larnis.

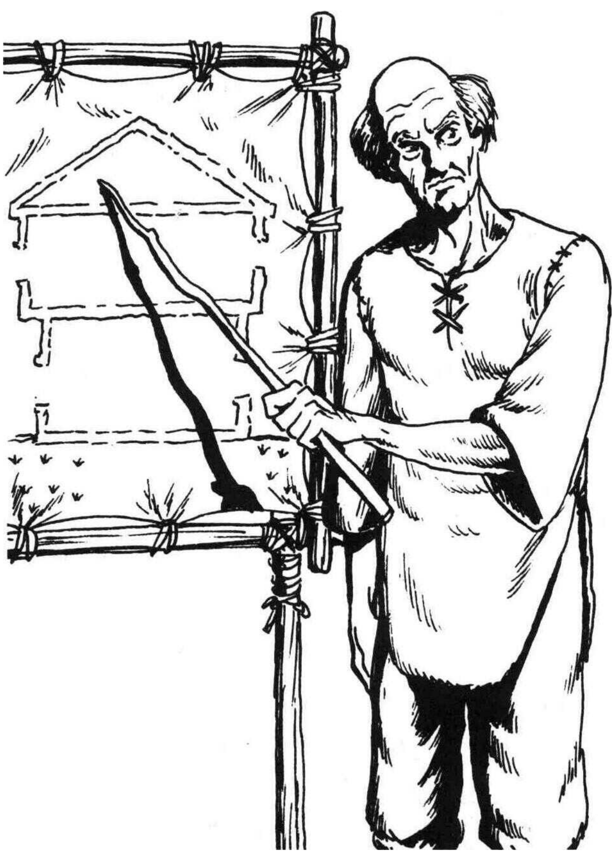
4.4 THE TASK

This adventure's task is simple enough: the players must merely exchange the scholar's cash for the bookseller's tome. The remainder of their time in the City of Beggars will be spent seeing the sights of an exotic new town. That is, at least, if everything goes smoothly.

4.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

The characters should be started out in the town of Meke Larnis, perhaps even already in the Barley's Yield. When the scholar arrives he will go straight to the tavern, rent a room, and begin to look for likely lads for the job he hopes to commission. The pay is high enough to be almost certain to attract the players attention, but to add color to the adventure the GM may wish to give added incentives. If the characters are from anywhere in the surrounding lands they will have heard stories of the Strayhold and the excitement of its streets. Wherever they are from they may desire goods which are not available in their home towns, or just a taste of the nightlife that can only be found in a lawless city. If these aspects are played up enough the scholar's errand becomes no more than an excuse to do something the PCs have always wanted to do anyway.

RILLIT TEACHING SECOND-STORY TACTICS



4.42 AIDS

It is quite possible that the PCs will complete this mission without receiving any outside aid. If, however, they get into trouble too deep for their abilities, the GM has the option of putting Vellser Orlit into the scenario to help as he sees fit. They may also wander into the shop of some good citizen who can aid them in one way or another. In general, though, the characters should be left on their own, to wander the town as they choose.

4.43 OBSTACLES

There will be nothing purposely standing in the way of the party's completing their mission. The Strayhold is not, however, known for the safety of its streets. In every shadow there is a thief, and many of the town's businessmen are really in the business of swindling. Any inexperienced PCs coming into town with lots of cash, looking for fun, are bound to find trouble.

4.44 REWARDS

The greatest reward to be had from this trip to the City of Rogues is an exciting time. The gold offered by Terrin will almost certainly be spent or lost by the time the young adventurers make their way out of town. They may gain a few useful items, but more importantly, they will without doubt learn a few things and acquire a good deal of experience with the wild world outside their home towns. What more could a band of carefree youngsters ask?

4.5 ENCOUNTERS IN STRAYHOLD

The tables at the end of this module details chances of various random encounters in the streets of the city. It should be used for any trip through the streets, in any adventure, with checks being made every ninety minutes in in the lower portions of the town and every hour in the more dangerous regions farther in.

In addition to the random checks there are a few special encounters that should be included to add spice to the players' visit. These are described in the following paragraphs and should be inserted as the GM sees fit or when an unacceptable result is rolled on the encounter table.

4.51 A CHALLENGE

This scenario is simple and can be set in any area of the city, though it might be most likely in or near a tavern. A young warrior from the North by the name of Korlin is in particularly bad spirits on the day of this visit. As the party passes him he will glare into the eyes of the most formidable looking fighter among them. Any response to this, from returning the evil look to completely ignoring it will be taken as insulting or disrespectful. The warrior will step into his target's path and demand redress for the insult. He will not take "no" for an answer and will push for a fight. He will agree to whatever rules are set down as far as restraining killing blows and such, but will abide by none of them. He will stop only when his opponent is no longer standing. He will offer to lay bets but will not willingly pay if he loses.

The crowds of the city are always up for a good fight, so as soon as the altercation begins they will start to form a ring. Any attempts to back down will draw only jeers and cat calls from the onlookers. There will be a good deal of betting amongst the spectators with

odds going to the Northman.

There are no constables to put an end to the fight so it will continue until it conies to a resolution. Any PCs who attempt to aid their champion in his battle will be warned by those around them that such actions are not viewed highly here. If they should persist, their efforts will be matched by others on the side of the warrior. Once the fight is over the crowd will begin to disperse, paying and collecting their bets as they go. It is town custom that in such a fight the loser's goods are taken by the winner but Korlin is too happy with his own gear, a broad axe and a chain shirt, too bother with anything save a purse from his foe. If this happens to contain the scholar's money there may be need of more bloodshed to get it back. A saving grace in this is that it is only in open duels that any rules about ganging up on someone are applied. No one will be too upset if the Northman is taken down, around the next corner, by the party as a whole.

This adventure will give the party a taste of combat and teach them that the world is not always just. Sometimes trouble finds you even when you do not deserve it and leaves you no way to avoid it. The GM may also choose to alter the situation to have Korlin higher in level while leaving the players a chance to back down from the fight, accepting the jeers of the crowd in order to save their lives.

4.52 THEFT

While looking about the sights of the city the party is hit by three young (first level) cutpurses working as a team. Their target will be either the bag in which the money from Arcle Terrin is stashed or the book itself, as well as any other goods they can snatch. Their game is to stage a fight in the street that will move across the path of the PCs. In the confusion that arises as the two bands collide they will make their moves. Each will take one PC and attempt to relieve him of some valuable looking item. Only the theft of the scholar's property need be successful but any others will add spice. As soon as the heist is made the rogues will take off for the nearest alley. Then it becomes a game of tag with the cutpurses trying to work their way back to the safety of the guildhall.

The GM must control the movements of the rogues carefully. They must lead a lively chase, but if they disappear too quickly and too cleverly into the crowd the PCs will have almost no chance of catching them up in these unfamiliar streets. The chase should run through streets and alleys to provide various sorts of terrain. Once caught, the rogues will first deny everything. When this tack fails they will meekly offer the return of their loot and expect to be let free. In this city robbery is not a crime and these young men have powerful friends. If they are not released they will begin to cry for help and it will not be long in coming. A few older guildsmen have the duty of supervising the youngsters of their guild and will arrive and attempt to take control of the situation, they will apologize for any inconvenience but will make no further offer of redress. It will not be too difficult for the PCs to see that they are out-gunned is this case. The rogues will then leave, scolding their juniors for botching the job. In the guild, once a job has failed there is no enmity toward the mark, just a nod good day and a hasty exit.

4.53 THE SPLIT UP

This adventure may well arise out of the last, but, again, it can as easily fit in at any point during the visit. In the teeming crowds, one or more players will be split off from the rest. The search of each faction for the other will lead them into no more dangerous or exciting areas than they might have been to otherwise, but going it alone will add excitement to the time they spend separated.

This scenario poses some difficult problems for the GM. The players themselves must actually be put into separate rooms with a strict time-table being kept to simulate simultaneous play. If either group knows what the other is doing, most of the excitement of the separation will be lost. The dangers posed by the separation must be played to their fullest to make the PCs uneasy about it. The streets are too noisy for shouts to carry far and with danger all around it may prove unwise to advertise the problem anyway. What should result is a bit of small group adventuring with no one getting seriously hurt before the band is reunited. Of course, if some maverick decides he can take on the city alone it would probably be best to let him see for himself what life is really like downtown.

4.54 WITNESS

Passing an alley between two buildings the party sees a mugging in progress. The victim is a man in late middle age and his assailants are showing little mercy. As the PCs pass, one thug looks up and greets them with a happy grin as if he were selling melons at a street cart. From here the plot is up to the PCs. They may choose to ignore the sight altogether and pass on to enjoy their day in the city. If, however, pity or anger moves them to action the scenario will run much like the chase in section 4.52. There will be a twist though, in that these muggers are not so timid nor so young as the cutpurses described above. There are two of them and both have some training (second level warriors). They will take to flight at first but will use surprise attacks and dirty tricks to turn the tables on their pursuers, attacking with stubby clubs and long knives. They are quite familiar with the city's streets and will take advantage of any aid they can find. They have been trained by Ossim Rallah that calling for help is a disgrace and so will fight or run but will not bring other guildsmen against the party.

The GM must show the same concerns in this scenario as were listed for 4.52. It will not, however, be a tragedy if these two get away. They have nothing that is vital to the PCs' mission. In any case, they will not immediately try to escape anyway. Their first thought will be to punish anyone who might be so rude as to interfere with their business. The victim, by the way, will die just after the muggers leave, due to the injuries they have given him. His purse and the forty silvers it carried are already in the hands of his assailants. Each thug also has eleven to twenty coppers of his own.

4.55 RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE

This table — found in the rear of this book — is to be used for any trip through the city. Each area is listed with the chances of various encounters. When an encounter occurs the GM must evaluate the situation and engineer the meeting to match the circumstances and the PCs involved, adjusting for numbers and level of both groups. Warriors found in the castle will be either Orc guards or soldiers visiting the Mage. Rogues or muggers encountered may be on or off duty which might produce an actual attack or just a stop for conversation. In any case, the event should be set up to allow for some sort of interaction will occur.

5.0 RAID ON THE CLAN-HALL OF ROGUES

For adventurers of moderate experience this scenario will prove quite challenging. Its general setting is the same as that of section 4.0, but it deals in more detail with the clan of the Rogues and with the more dangerous Old Mark as a whole. The play of the adventure will be demanding for the GM as well, requiring a great deal of discretion in maintaining play balance. It may well be used as a follow up to the first adventure, after some time is spent by the PCs building up a little more power, or as a prelude to the attack on the Mage described in section 6.0. In any case it is advised that the GM be completely familiar with the material in the other scenarios as well as the particulars of this one before play begins.

5.1 THE TALE

In Meke Larnis, there is a stir this night. The local Animist, Lorril Tesserne, has come to the Barley's Yield to impart bad news. His shrine's totem, the battle horn of the hero Grell Inarthenil has been stolen by Rogues. With it went some thirty silver coins, which were to be used for the upkeep of his shrine, but the money is not important to him. The horn was the focus of his power and a talisman for the good of the village. As he speaks his listeners grow more and more angry. It is certain that such a robbery is the work of the Rogues of the Shattered Step. Something must be done. They agree to find a band of adventurers to steal back the horn, and pool their funds to produce a reward of fifteen gold coins to draw strong men to their cause.

THE HORN OF GRELL INARTHENIL

This ivory horn is carved with scenes of galloping horses and is bound with three broad silver bands. It was made for the hero Grell and is tied to him still. It can be carried from his shrine but whenever it is winded it will return to his side. When this power is evoked the person using it and all who are touching him, as well as any objects they hold or wear will be carried with it to the shrine in Meke Larnis. A popular local tale tells of an adventurer named Bref Callanin who escaped the fire of a dragon's breath by using the horn this way. Unfortunately for the villagers this tale is popular enough that the Rogues are unlikely to blow the horn themselves.

At this point the PCs enter the story. How they are to be drawn in is best decided by the GM. They may be tempted by the reward alone if they are in need of currency, or the thought of a challenging adventure may be enough. One or more of the characters may live in the town or have relatives there. Many motivations are possible. They need not agree to seek the horn at all. They may simply take the suggestion of a raid and end all contact with the villagers. In such a case, however, they may be sorely pressed to escape from the clanhall without winding the horn. If these characters are used in all three scenarios it may be best if they are in fact natives of the region, helping because it is the right thing to do.

The party that undertakes the mission will find the townsfolk eager to help and full of tales of the time Grandpa went to the Fire Town, but little helpful information is really to be had. One middle aged cooper can tell of the time he delivered some barrels to the clan hall many years ago. "It sits way at the back of the town. I just went up to the gate, but it's a big place with a wall all across the front and high cliffs on both sides." Another man has heard that the Rogues hold a market each month to sell off the rare goods they have obtained and it seems that they must store their loot somewhere in their hall between market days. The cleric is willing to tell the party of the horn and its powers and says to use it when they wish to return. Beyond this the villagers can only tell the location of the Shattered Step and donate some goods and provisions.

5.2 THE NPCs

The people of Meke Larnis will not be terribly important to the actual play of this adventure. The only one with any real power is the priest, and he considers himself far too old to take any action. The other folk are farmers and craftsmen with no training in the use of weapons or magic.

In the tavern the night of the theft, however, there is one fellow of note. He is Haddil, an agent of the clan. At first, the ruckus will interest him only mildly. The clan has little fear of retribution from such a lot of farmers. When he sees the party hired, though, he will begin to take notice.

LORRIL TESSERNE



5.21 LORRIL TESSERNE

This aged Animist has lived in Meke Larnis for all his life. He is well liked by the people and serves them well in turn. He is charming and spry but, at eighty years, he is not fit for world traveling. He wears simple farmer's clothing of earthy colors, carries a short wooden baton, and wears an ivory horn slung from one shoulder.

The shrine of Grell Inarthenil is a low stone structure with a thatched roof and several windows in each wall. It is open to visitors and Lorril is always willing to help good people who are in need, so long as they seem to respect the fallen hero. His support comes from the donations of his parishioner and they are usually generous so he lives well. He holds services every day in the morning and a few villagers attend each. At Midsummers he also holds a festival to celebrate the birth of his patron hero. When he is in the shrine he is able to cast an additional five spells per day.

Notable Skills: *Ritual (allows unusual spell casting within his shrine) 70, Use Item 50, Read Runes 45.* ***Languages:*** *Westron 5, Nahaiduk 3, Dunael 3.* ***Spell Lists:***

Calm Spirits, Surface Ways, Protections, Nature's Lore, Blood Ways, Direct Channeling, Purifications, Creations. ***Base Spells OB 11. Directed Spells OB*** *16.*

5.22 HADDIL

Haddil is a young man of unknown lineage, having been orphaned in the Strayhold when still a child. He has dark eyes and hair and a swarthy complexion. He does not keep very clean and is not at all versed in the ways of politeness. He is a capable scout for his age but is not always terribly bright. On seeing the party hired he will not set out directly to alert his clan. Instead, hoping to win a bit of glory with his fellow clansmen, he will choose to follow the group, to watch them and assess the threat. A more skillful man might get away with such a gambit but Haddil is certain to get caught (The G.M. should engineer this shortly before the arrival in Fire Town, making sure that it is obvious that he has been spying on the the party.). In the hands of the players, he will first claim total innocence, under pressure, though, he will admit to his ties to the clan. After a moment's thought he will claim that the clan already knows of the mission and that he will be avenged if any harm comes to him. He will try to back this up with a tale that he is the son of Conul Uld and that he is quite important to the clan, a story only the most gullible players will believe. He knows little of import to the PCs about the clanhall. His status is too low for him to be aware of the treasure room's location and he never keeps track of the date, so he won't know when the next market day will be.

Notable Skills: *Stalk/Hide 22, Climb 25, Ambush 2.* ***Languages:*** *Westron 4, Logathig 2.*

5.23 ECURIS THE PROPHET

This ancient man is thought by many of the city's folk to be somewhat mad. He has a small hut in Mystics Hollow where he sells fortunes to the travellers. At most times his eyes wander and he mumbles under his breath. Few locals give much credit to his predictions. The careful observer may note, however, that his eyes are not always glazed. In fact he is one of the few agents of good at work within the city. When the Wise visit the Strayhold his shop is one they do not miss. He watches the goings on within the town with astoundingly keen perception and reports to his visitors what he has seen. He is also used by them to put words into the proper ears, when he can. He actually does have power as a seer but uses it only most rarely, only in the cause of good. He is also almost as mad as the townsfolk believe him to be. Even in the execution of his service to good he will speak only in riddles and rhymes.

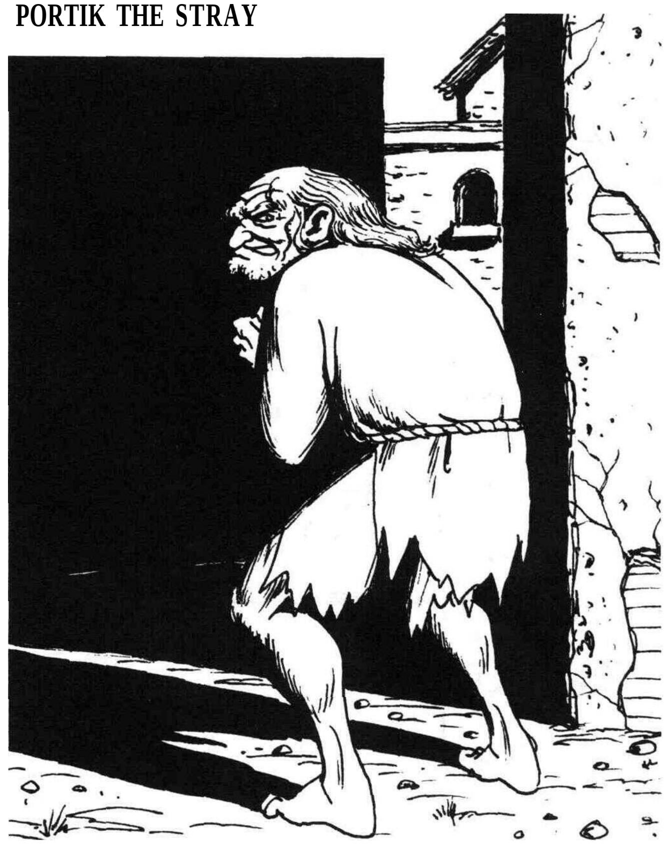
Notable *Skills: Read Runes 48, Use Item 37, Perception 68.* ***Languages:*** *Westron 5, Sindarin 4, Dunael 3.*

5.24 PORTIK THE STRAY

It is difficult for an observer to imagine that this surly Northman might have any redeeming features. His face is scarred and he has only a few teeth in his ugly head. He speaks with a rough accent and finds no use for polite language. He is, however, a clever cutpurse and so has made himself useful to Gam the Fair as a spy in the Rogues' camp. He spends most of his days stealing with the clan but claims to have an aged grandmother whom he must tend at night. This leaves him free to report to his master and keeps him from being sent out of town. The Rogues do not suspect him but he does not have the clout to bring in non-members such as the PCs to look about. He also could not explain his presence after hours with a raiding band except by claiming coercion. If he is caught with the PCs he will claim that they have forced him to show them in by taking his dear granny hostage. In this he will almost certainly be believed by any of the Rogues. Such a lack of loyalty is typical of how he will act in any dangerous situation.

Notable Skills: *Climb 30, Stalk/Hide 28, Pick Lock 25, Disarm Trap 15, Trickery 30.* ***Languages:*** *Westron 4.*

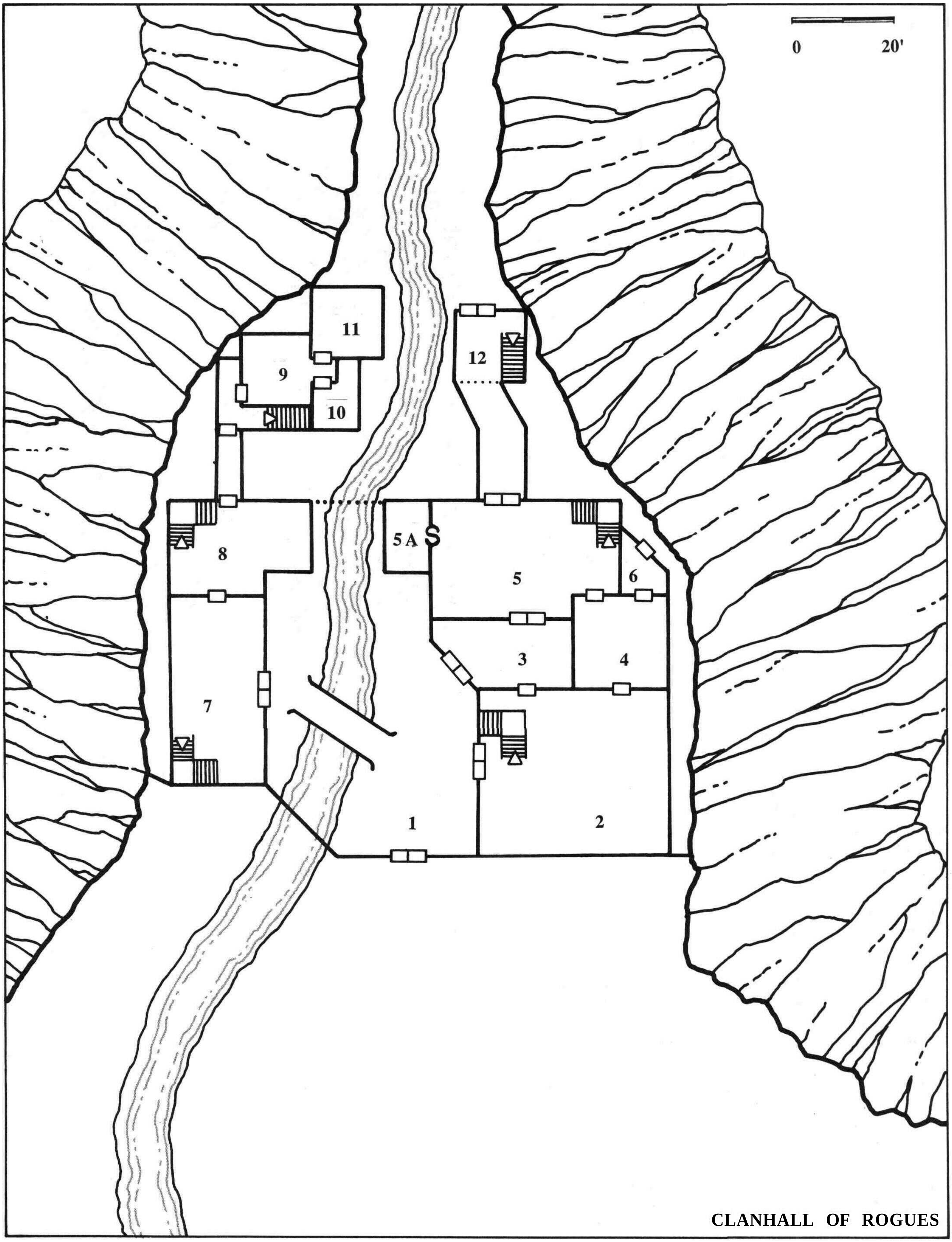
PORTIK THE STRAY



5.3 THE CLANHALL

The hall of the Rogues is built entirely of thick timbers, brought from the forest. Lodged into the back wall of the ravine system, straddling the river, it presents the city with a high (15') wall all across its front. Behind its gates is a courtyard surrounded by buildings. The building to the right is devoted to clan business, to the left is the Rogues' school and behind that is the house of Conul Uld. The construction is rough in style, with the timbers still round and the gaps filled with clay. There are no first floor windows but in the upper stories, any room with an outside wall has at least one. The roofs are made of cedar shingles and have grown a thick coat of dark green moss. Where the stream passes in from the back and out under the wall there are thick iron gratings to prevent unwelcome entry. The wall is also topped with sharp blades for the same reason.

1. Courtyard. Floored with dirt, this area acts as an outdoor training ground for the apprentice Rogues. A wooden bridge leads from the gate, across the stream to the school. The doors that face into the yard are sturdy but only rarely locked, as is also true of most interior doors; the Rogues place great stock in the clan law that no thief should rob a fellow clansman, though playful pilfery from the clan itself is not uncommon among the apprentices. During daylight and evening there is an almost constant flow of Rogues, coming in and out through the gate. At night there will always be a pair of young Rogues assigned to guard duty, but they will usually be occupied by some sort of game or even asleep. In any case they are usually sitting on the bridge. The bars that cover the river courses in and out are thick steel; any attempt at cutting them will almost certainly prove impractical.



CLANHALL OF ROGUES

2. Clanhall. This large chamber serves several purposes. Day to day it serves as mess hall and sleeping quarters for a good number of the clansmen. On meeting days, once a month, the Rogues gather here to hear reports from the Council. On any given day there will be from 1 to 10 Rogues of about third level lounging about. Late at night there will be 23 to 50 sleeping on bedrolls among the benches. In the evening all will be lit by great braziers set upon the long tables.

3. Anteroom. The walls here are hung with fine tapestries, and several high-backed chairs stand against them, along with a few end tables and one couch.

4. Kitchen. Here Mother Garreth prepares meals for all "her boys. "She and her staff do not keep the place too clean but it is a well-fitted kitchen. Two large ovens share a fire in the center and there is also a stove by the east wall. Pots and pans hang from the ceiling along with many large spoons, forks, and knives. The staff works here all day, but the room is empty by shortly after dinner each evening. Mother Garreth is a witch of a woman who most of the Rogues swear is part Orc, but she does love her work and will put up with no illicit guests in her kitchen. In the corner by the pantry door live a young blind boy who washes pots during the day. He has been taken in by the cook and is given food and a cot in exchange for his labor. It has become a custom among the clansmen to give him a coin or two whenever they pass and he is a sort of mascot to them. Any who come near him will be greeted with a bright "Good morrow sir!" and an outstretched palm. If he receives no donation he will merely continue to hold out his hand until his visitors leave the kitchen. The clansmen have been good to him so, donations or no, he will not aid anyone who enters illicitly, though only a very rash question or statement would cause him to raise an immediate alarm. His name is Jissom.

5. Reception Room. Across the West wall of this large room is a set of five comfortable armchairs set upon a low dais. The other walls are lined with smaller chairs and two 6' x 3' tables. Behind the chairs at the West hang a very large tapestry with a complex pattern of black and red. The pattern centers on the center chair and is mildly magical, lending a five percent bonus to that chair's occupant in any attempt to manipulate a listener who stands before him. The North and South walls also have hangings which depict the sign of the Guild, a cut purse, and large map of Rhovanion respectively.

5A. Treasury. Behind the West wall's tapestry is a well hidden secret door. The hanging itself covers the first trap. A net is hung along its back side in such a way that when the center portion is pushed away from the wall to allow access to the door, unless two cords at the bottom are first untied, the bottom of the net will be pulled to the wall and up to the top of the tapestry, fifteen feet above, scooping up anyone standing between it and the wall. It is designed to have an alarm sound when it is triggered but some enterprising young apprentice seems to have stolen the bell. The trap works on a counterweight system which pours several hundred pounds of water into buckets to draw up the net. Thus, there is a twenty second delay as the buckets fill, but once the trap is sprung its grip on captives will be very tight (There is a 60% chance that a B crush critical will be delivered.). This trap is *extremely hard* (-30) to see without setting it off, but if it is detected it is a *light* (+10) task to disarm it. Once the trap is sprung it is simply a matter of cutting a few ropes to free its captives, but drawing a blade while in its clutches is a *very hard* maneuver, and people on the ground may have a hard time reaching the net. Once behind the tapestry, the person seeking the door must still make one (-10) perception roll to spot it and another to find the means to open it, a panel of the wall beside it that must be pushed. Beyond the door three steps lead down to the treasury floor. Any more than five pounds of weight applied to the first or third step will trigger a volley of darts. These should be rolled as six attacks without modifiers on the missile attack table. They are also poisoned with venom (from the Ennerling spiders of Mirkwood) which will debilitate a man for twelve hours if he fails to save against a fourth level attack. This trap is *hard* (-10) to detect and would take several hours to actually disarm.

***NOTE-** It should be assumed that any player who does not say otherwise when faced with the stairs, will use them all.*

Once the adventurers are safely inside the treasure room, they will see that the Rogues have made quite a haul. All loot beyond each thief's living allowance is brought to this chamber to await the next Rogues' market, now only a few days away, and all sorts of goods may be found here. (The G.M. may wish to impress upon the party the need to make their search quite brief. There is much treasure to be had but if they are allowed to take too much, game balance may be distorted. Perhaps items particularly suited to specific characters should be moved to more conspicuous locations.) Across the back wall are several (5) large and sturdy chests made of blackened oak with fittings of iron. They hold a great store of gems and jewels but are fastened shut with bolts that must be chiseled off, a very noisy process.

Between the first and second chests from the right is a heap of rods, wands and staves, fourteen all told, only two of which retain any magical power. One is a rod about three feet long, made of reddish wood inlaid with copper wire in an ivy pattern. It has the power to project a net of vines twenty feet in diameter to entangle any living thing within its grasp. The attack is rolled as a +50 ball spell with any critical indicating entanglement, no damage is inflicted. The vines are susceptible to normal fire and to cutting, the former method destroying them in five round but delivering on C heat critical, the latter taking three minutes. Any creature with a strength of 90 to 100 will break free in 7 to 12 rounds. A strength of 101 or better will not be held at all. After ten minutes the vines will wither away and fall to dust. The other is an oaken staff that is +15 in combat and will cast a *Path Tale* spell (Ranger, *Path Mastery)* once per day. The other wands will be receptive to enchantments lain upon them, but do not now hold any.

Along the North and South walls run rows of pegs from which a great number of weapons, coats, suites of armor and such things hang. All are of high quality and a few are magical. Among them hangs the horn of Grell Inarthenil. The heirloom for which the party came. In addition there are a +10 Elvish long bow with a quiver of normal arrows, a coat that will change color on command (+10 to hiding rolls when camouflage might help), a short axe that is +20 against Orcs and Half-orcs, and a flute, hung in its case, that will summon up a mist when it is played. The mist is thin at first but with every level of skill in flute playing the visibility in the effected area will drop by 5' from an initial range of 60'. The thinnest mist forms within two rounds and thickens to drop visibility by ten feet for each round thereafter until the player's maximum thickness is reached. The area effected is one half mile in radius. The mist's effects are halved in bright sunlight or indoors and indoors only areas that are contiguous with the room where the caster stands will be effected. The spell's duration is twenty minutes, but after that time the mist will dissipate only as would a natural fog (i.e. quickly on a dry, hot day but slowly in a damp, cold cavern.). These items hang among thirteen rich coats and cloaks, two suits of rigid leather armor, one suite of plate, one of pliable leather, nine assorted swords (two +5 but not magic), one other axe, and an unstrung harp. One small chest sits at the base of the North wall which is light enough to be carried off. In it are a bag holding fifteen gold and a leather bound spell book containing *Essence Hand, Unbarring Ways, Living Change*, and *Light Law*. The chest is locked with a medium lock and guarded by a Lock Warden of fourth level.

LOCK WARDEN

These creatures are summoned into being by means of magic. Once brought into being the warden will live inside a key hole and come out to attack anyone who tampers with the lock without its special charmed key. The level of the guardian is equal to that of the summoner. For each level above first the warden receives the following bonuses: hits: +10, d.b.: +5, o.b.: +5. These are added to its base stats which are as follow: Lvl.: 1+, Speed: MF, Hits: 30+, AT: RL, DB: 20+, Attack: 20+Ra, Size: M, Crit.: Reg. The creature appears as a dun-colored humanoid with slightly vague outlines.

6. Pantry. The shelves that fill this room are stacked with bags and boxes of various bulk goods. Most of the clan's food is bought daily in town but non-perishables such as flour, vinegar and salt are bought in large quantities and kept here. The room has a door to the outside through which the kitchen staff go to feed the goats and chickens that they keep in the yard between the hall and the cliff. *[**NOTE:** Anyone who passes through this yard will cause quite a ruckus to rise from the animals. Such disturbances are common so no one inside is likely to notice, though it may unnerve the*

PCs quite a bit.] The door has a lock but in recent times it has fallen into disuse; the kitchen staff is somewhat lazy in such matters.

7. Classroom. This wing of the clanhall is devoted to the training of the apprentices and journeymen of the clan. Classes take up the first few hours of every day, during which times the classrooms will be full. After noon they are usually empty until evening, when a few young Rogues can be found in each going over their lessons. Such studying goes on until around ten when the students leave until morning comes again. In this chamber rank beginners are taught the fundamentals of the thieving professions, and the basic structure and organization of the clan itself. It is furnished with long tables with low benches along them. At the north end, a few feet in front of the door, stand a large desk and a lectern of dark, carved wood. The desk holds nothing more than a few sheets of paper, an ink bottle and a rather nice pen. The pen is, however, magical. When it is used to inscribe a rune the spell may be cast two times before it vanishes.

8. Classroom. Here young Rogues are taught the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. It is set with rows of desks each with a small storage space under the writing surface. Each of the desks holds a few sheets of paper, a pen with ink, a slate and a stylus. On the east wall is a large black board, behind a podium.

9. Parlor. The rear annex of the hall is the home of the clanmaster. It is connected to the west wing by an enclosed walkway. The parlor is richly furnished with a comfortable sofa and several overstuffed chairs. It holds a number of portraits of former head men in fancy frames. On a low table in the room's center is a fine silver tea service and a lovely crystal decanter full of delicious sherry.

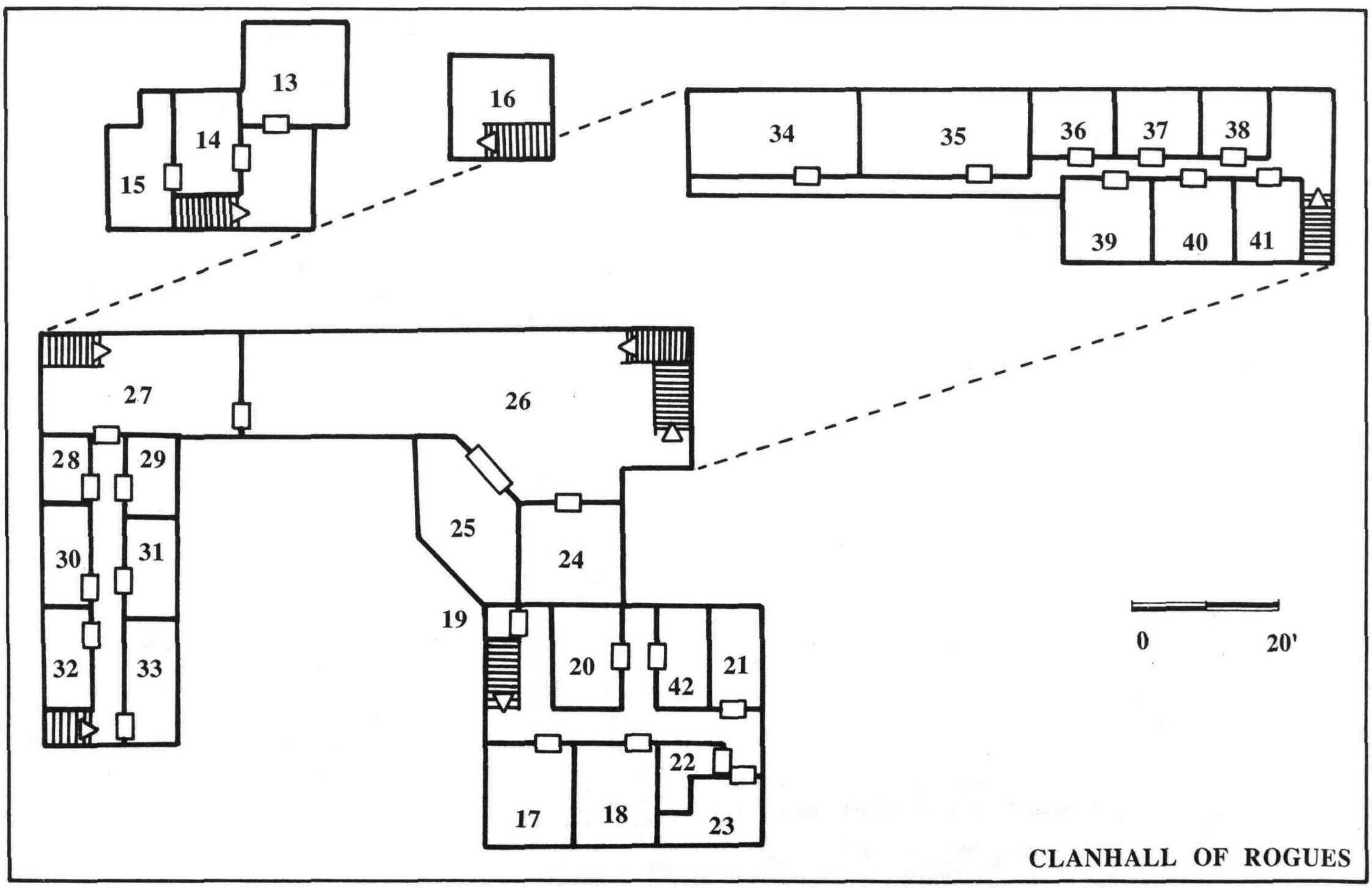
10. Small Kitchen. Here sumptuous meals are prepared for the lord of the Rogues and his guests. Any who are versed in the ways of cooking will see that the equipment is the best that money can buy. It is occupied in daylight and early evening hours by a small staff of Conul Uld's personal servants, but usually stands empty through the night. An observant visitor might notice that a row of meat cuts hanging along the south wall seems to have no protection against spoilage. The secret to this is that it has been sprayed with water from a magic bottle owned by the cook. The bottle itself sits on a counter under where the meat hangs. It has a spray nozzle and a squeeze bulb like a perfume atomizer and when normal water is sprayed from it onto any perishable food the food will never spoil.

11. Private Dining Room. This elegant room is dominated by a seven foot square table around which stand twelve high-backed chairs. The table is of rich, polished rosewood and the chairs are of maple. In hanging, glass-fronted cabinets can be seen beautiful china place settings and fine sterling flatware. At the center of the table is a large golden bowl that holds fresh flowers at meal times.

12. The Back Door. Every good den has an escape route. The doors at the rear of this room lead out to a steep and dangerous path which lets onto the high ground above. The room itself is filled with polearms and spears with which even a small number of Rogues could hold the path beyond indefinitely, inflicting heavy casualties, against even a very large force. The doorway from the other buildings can also be sealed with a sturdy portcullis, dropped from above (see #16).

13. Servants' Bedroom. Conul Uld's personal servants live here. The cook and his two assistants have bunks built onto the north wall and the butler sleeps by the east wall on a nice bed. Along the west wall are four small bureaus, each with four drawers full of clothing and personal effects. The top drawer of each is locked *(medium* +0) and contains from 1-6 silver pieces. During the day the room is empty, the cooks are in the kitchen and the butler is on errands. At night all four will be in bed, sleeping soundly. Only the butler has any training with weapons. He is a second level warrior and keeps a broad sword under his bed. He is quite devoted to Conul Uld and will fight to the death if he discovers a threat to his master's life.

14. Conul Uld's Bedroom. This small chamber is very well apportioned, with rich, silk wall hangings of dark blue and green and matching upholstery on the two cushioned chairs. The bed, also fitted in blue and green, is of dark, sturdy oak. At its foot is a chest, also of oak with iron hardware, which holds extra linens and blankets. Beyond the bed, against the west wall, stands a large maple wardrobe. In it are several sets of well made clothing which range from high finery to a suite which is made to look like rags. Beside the wardrobe and behind a drape of silk, is a door, faced in studded leather.



15. Private Study. The door to Conul Uld's study is always locked with an *extremely hard* (-30) lock. More importantly though, it is guarded. The leather facing of the door is the body of its guardian, a magically created beast called Doorkeep. If any but Conul Uld should try to open the door, even with the proper key, its form will shift to that of a man, and it will attack the transgressor while howling out a loud warning call. It fights using its fists, made of what were once the leather's studs, as maces. It cannot suffer from stunning, bleeding, broken bones or paralyzation, as its body is like solid leather and animated by magical energy. The creature is clever and will fight with intelligence. Its goal will be to inflict as much damage and buy as much time as possible. It may use trickery, and its ability to take any form to take its opponents off guard.

Behind the door is a snug chamber walled with a rich reddish wood paneling. The floor is covered with a thick brown carpet with the clan's crest woven into it. There are three comfortable, leather covered chairs, a low, carved mahogany coffee table and a reading stand of wrought iron with a hardwood top, set around the room. Along the south wall is a case of leather bound books which cover topics from thievery to history. Their value to a collector would be great, but they have no magic or information that would appeal to the average adventurer. On the east wall to the south of the door hangs a suit of pliable leather armor which magically protects as if it were chain without limiting the wearer's ability to move about. (In combat this is simulated by using the damage in the chain column with a DB addition of twenty to represent the higher mobility. In other actions it is simply treated as leather armor.) To the north of the door is a painting of a stormy seacoast in a heavy frame. At its bottom is a small flat space that, if examined under a magical light, will show an inscription, *Ebereithil*. When this word is said by someone standing before the canvas, he will be transported to the place depicted, a spot on the seashore not far from Dol Amroth.

In the alcove on the north wall are arrayed Conul Uld's weapons and his thieving tools. On a wooden rack around the three walls hang ten short swords, each beside its scabbard, a small shield and two short bows. On a table beneath them lie a small chest and a leather hood. The shield is not magical in any way, but is made of a light and sturdy wood which adds an additional five points to its DB modifier. The swords range from his first blade (which was never fine and is now quite battered and dull) to his present arm which is very well made. The fourth, ninth and tenth are enchanted. Number four simply adds five to attack rolls. Ten is the master thief's best blade. It adds twenty to both OB and DB for its wielder and allows him +30 on all acrobatic and tumbling maneuvers in combat. Number nine is the most richly adorned of the lot, with a hilt of gold and silver and a wreathing of leaves etched into the blade along its entire length. Its scabbard is of ivory and set with seven rubies, surrounded with gold. Anyone touching this sword, however, puts himself in great danger; the sword is powerfully cursed. When the lightest contact is made the blade will leap to attack all who stand near. It attacks with a bonus of +70 and will not desist until it has been hit for eighty points. It is as hard to damage as a man in +20 plate and is not affected by critical hits, save that when a critical results in downing the foe the sword will be struck to the floor and lose one round of attack. Neither bow has any special properties but both are of high quality.

The hood on the table is an interesting device in that it has no eye holes. Its power is that when it is worn its user's hearing is greatly enhanced, so much so that, if he has practiced with it (expending his normal development point cost for two levels in a subterfuge skill) he will be able to move about as if by sight, even in total darkness. He will also be able to hear the tumblers in a lock or movement beyond a door, adding twenty to rolls for attempts at either listening or picking locks. This power can only be used when the wearer himself is very quiet. The chest is locked and trapped. The lock is *very hard* (-20) to pick and any attempt, successful or not, will set off the trap if it is not first disarmed. The trap's mechanism is actually in the table on which the chest sits, so it is almost impossible (-60) to detect from a search of the box itself. Unless a small lever under the table is first tripped, any movement of the chest will release a death cloud (Mage: *Wind Law)* which will fill the chamber. Once opened, the chest reveals a set of thief's picks and a leather gauntlet of curious manufacture. The picks are not magical but were crafted by Alfric the smith and are the best he has ever made. They are very strong and will be twice as hard as a normal set to break (They have a 50% chance of holding strong whenever a normal pick would break.) and through their good design they add an extra twenty to any picking attempt in which they are used.

The gauntlet is a prosthetic right hand. It is magical and affixes to the wrist with a very powerful bond, but works only as well as a normal hand and adds no special skill or strength bonuses. It must be used for two months before even normal proficiency will be gained, though from the start it will be of some use.

The western half of the north wall is hung with small shelves which hold a number of small, but very valuable pieces of jewelry, tiaras, bracelets, and pendants with a total value of about four hundred gold pieces. (All, of course, are stolen.)

Under the carpet here is a small removable section in the floor. It covers a cubbyhole that holds a bag of fifteen mithril pieces. A perception roll at minus forty will notice a bump in the floor-covering where the panel has not been set down properly. The remaining wall, the west, has three narrow, heavily barred windows. Flanking the central one stand two graceful statuettes. Carved of marble, they depict lithe maidens draped with ivy vines and eating from bunches of grapes. Each stands three feet tall and both are very heavy.

16. Tower. Above their backdoor the Rogues have built a short tower. Its walls are pierced by arrow slits that aim both out toward the uphill path and in toward the clanhall. Thus it can be used both as first defense and as last retreat, depending on whence an attack might come. Here also are the winches for the portcullis below, that will seal the backdoor off from the clanhall. The gate is drawn, up but can be released by throwing one large lever on the south wall.

17. Bedroom. This is the home of Jankis, the clan's Markmaster. He is a neat man and his room is kept tidy. In the south-east corner is a massive desk in which are kept all of the ledgers and notebooks covering the clan's equipment. Along the east wall is a great rack of pigeon holes which are used in a complex check-out system. On the west wall are a large wardrobe and a bed. In the wardrobe are simple garments and cloaks that belong to the Markmaster.

18. Storage. Here are all of the clan's tools and devices. There are racks of clothing and disguises, a large set of shelves filled with various picks and other tools of the trade, bundled tarpaulins, and whatever else might be needed in the execution of clan work. This chamber is locked (-30) and the key is kept by Jankis.

19. Closet. In this small cubby hole are linens for the clansman who sleep on this floor and the floor above. Near the floor on the north wall a careful search will reveal a small peephole that looks into the council chamber beyond.

20. Bedroom. This room belongs to Havnis, the second in command of the muggers' branch. He is much like Hrothgar Ednew and his rough nature can be seen in his chamber's fittings. Pinned to the west wall as trophies are a great many twisted locks of hair, many stained with blood, one taken from each of his victims. The room is otherwise bare of decoration and holds a simple bed and a chest in which he keeps his clothes, jumbled and dirty. On shelves by the door are the tools of Havnis' craft, a few clubs and blackjacks as well as a wicked looking hook-bladed knife about fifteen inches long.

21. Bedroom. This is the room of Kawsen the treasurer. It is set with a bed, two chairs, a chest made of rough-cut pine, and a small night stand. On the night stand is a bottle of strong wine which the clerk has "just to help me sleep." Late at night the man will be found in his bunk, severely drunk. He has had a problem with drink since his teens but has kept it from interfering with his work so it is overlooked by the council.

22. **Bedroom.** Mard Neffar's assistant, Helbran, lives in this small room. It is furnished simply with a bed, a desk and an oaken chest. On the desk are a few books, a history and a three volume geographical description of the lands of the South Kingdom. The clan teaches that a con man must be well informed. In the chest are several neatly folded sets of clothing of widely varied styles. Beneath them is a small rosewood box which holds a slate and stylus. This is a magical device which causes

anything written upon it to appear on an identical slate which is in the possession of Leardinoth the Mage. The slate will also receive messages in the same way and has no limit on its range. As might be guessed, Helbran is Leardinoth's ears within the clan. He may also, someday rise to the clan's leadership as he is quite competent and has managed to avoid making any powerful enemies.

23. Bedroom. Ferrin Gordlin, assistant to Rillit, makes his home here. He keeps a messy room with most of his clothing lying out on the bed rather than in the chest at its foot. The mess does not, however, reach to the top of a large table in the north-west corner. The table holds a small, carefully constructed model of several city buildings. In a cabinet an the wall above are materials and tools for such model making. Otherwise the room holds little of interest save a set of climbing claws and a grappling hook with rope in the bottom of the chest.

24. Bedroom. This room belongs to Ullis who is second among the cutpurses. The room is well decorated, with carpet of dark blue and wall hangings of lighter shades. The bed is in the south-east and is covered with quilts of blue and white. In the western alcove hang a number of different outfits which represent all levels of status. Beside the alcove, on a hook, hangs a nice weapon belt that holds a long dagger of fine workmanship. On a small shelf beside it is a tiny statue of a winging Grass-hawk. This will allow its possessor to assume the form of a Grass-hawk once a day when a command word, *Accipiter,* is spoken. Ullis has attained a high state of financial solvency through a bit of freelance work with a mercenary band from Loose Jacks Row.

25. Guild Office. Here the daily business of the clan is carried out. The room holds a large desk and several wooden chairs as well as a bookshelf that holds the business records in bound volumes. The office is overseen by Kawsen, the treasurer of the clan. He allocates funds for provisions and supervises the assessment of goods the Rogues bring in so that the clan gets a proper cut. During the day the office is always busy with one sort of transaction or another crossing the desk. After sundown, though, it is almost always empty since Kawsen is fond of gambling and ale at the White Purse and no one else is allowed inside it. This rule is one of the most strongly sanctioned laws of the clan.

26. Council Chamber. The inner sanctum of the Rogues clan stands surprisingly free of adornment. It holds a large and heavily built pentagonal table and five comfortable chairs, but the dark wood walls are bare. On the table are a crystal water pitcher and five matching glasses. The room is only used for meetings of the council and so stands empty most of the time.

27. Assessing Chamber. A long polished table runs from end to end of this chamber. On it during the day will be found any number of small heaps of loot, brought in from the streets to have a value placed upon it by the treasurer. This will typically consist of some forty gold worth of gems, jewelry and coins as well as, on rare occasions some sort of magic item. Such treasure should be decided upon by the GM as he sees fit, since each day's take is different. At the close of the day the table is cleared and sits empty all night.

28. Library. Many of Conul Uld's predecessors have felt, as he does, that education in all areas is important to any human and that reading widely is important to good education. To further this ideal the clan has built up quite a library. The books cover all sorts of topics, from general texts on the nature of magic to manuals listing favorite techniques for picking pockets. The room is a maze of shelves and is never more than dimly lit. Its aisles will almost always hold a few clansmen or apprentices, paging through the volumes. There are no books of any special power or properties, but there are general texts touching on nearly any topic (if one but has time to look).

29.—34. Classrooms. Each of these six rooms is set with a number of desks and a lectern. They are used for delivering lessons on more specialized aspects of the thieving profession. They are occupied on the same schedule as the rooms below.

35. Councilors' Study. Here the members of the council have collected a number of their most important or secret books, which are arrayed on a shelf along the west wall. There is a book devoted to each of the subterfuge skills which outlines particularly effective techniques which will give the reader a bonus equal to his Intelligence bonus (to reflect his ability to learn from a text) in attempting them, once he has spent time (development points as for a secondary skill) reading it carefully. There are also books on history and on geography and one thin volume details the *Unbarring Ways (Open Essence)* spell list, though clansman has pursued magic in many years. Also in the room are five nice, leather reading chairs and three low tables, each with a small oil lamp upon it.

36. Parlor. On occasions when the councilors wish to meet with each other or an outsider in relaxed surroundings this chamber is used. It is very comfortably appointed with a number of over-stuffed chairs, two nicely carved end tables that hold graceful lamps, and a large coffee table with a fair map of Western Middle-earth just beneath its glass surface. On a sideboard by the north wall stands a fine tea service made of beautiful cream colored porcelain and on the east and west hang portraits of several famous clansman of the past. This room is only rarely used and generally stands undisturbed for days on end.

37. Bedroom. Guests of the clan are given this chamber or the room across the hall. This one is empty at the time of the raid, containing nothing more than its bed, a three-drawered dresser, and two leather chairs.

38. Bedroom. For each of the clan's chiefs, a state room is set aside and kept ready. This is Hrothgar Ednew's. It is decorated in the gaudy style of a southern bandit captain. Bright yellows and blood reds adorn the walls and furniture in thick folds of cloth. The head of the muggers spends about half of his nights here and so has it well stocked with his clothing, all in a large wardrobe of polished maple against the north wall. On the inside of the left door of this hangs his cruel looking sword. It is a hooked scimitar which is enchanted so that any critical it inflicts will bleed for an additional hit per round. Besides the wardrobe the room holds a hard bed, two low stools like those used by the desert nomads of Far Harad, and a small brazier which is kept burning at all times, tended by a junior apprentice who comes in every hour or so that Ossim is not present. The room is very hot and smells of the scented wood that the brazier burns.

39. Bedroom. This chamber is used by Mard Neffar when he chooses not to go to his home in town. It is well furnished, with a comfortable bed, two chairs and a chest, as well as an oak writing desk. He keeps few of his personal belongings here but in the chest there is one change of clothes and a pouch that holds twenty-five silvers.

40. Bedroom. The Rogues second guestroom is occupied at the time of the raid by a very frightened gentleman from one of the near by Northman cities. He came to enlist services of the clan in his business competition but has found them to be a rougher bunch than he expected. A few unwise Kav Gorkaes early in his visit have earned him a great deal of trouble. He is now held, albeit politely, as an unwilling guest of the clansmen until his business partners deliver four hundred gold which the Rogues are calling a down payment for the job he has commissioned. This sum will leave his company almost bankrupt and in no position to take advantage of the Rogues' work. He will pay a quarter of the sum to anyone who can free him from the Rogues. The room is furnished just as number thirty-six across the hall.

41. Bedroom. Rillit has this room as his only home. He keeps it clean and organized but his possessions take up a bit more room than he has so there is little free floor space. The squirrel has overcome this problem by installing a gridwork of bars just below the ceiling which he uses to move about. Guests in his chamber are often inconvenienced by the fact that none of the open areas are connected by paths on the floor. Among the boxes and chests are any number of odd items that the thief has found use for in his work. Several coils of rope of varying thicknesses are heaped in the south-west corner. A cleverly wrought folding ladder, ten feet long when extended, sits beside them in the small rucksack that was made to carry it. Along the south wall are hung a number of sets of clothing, including three of the night-black outfits made by quill the weaver. The other boxes hold books, tools, architects' instruments, pens and paper, and many other nick nacks. The climber's bed is overhead on the ceiling bars, just above the door. Uninvited guests who pass his door at night are likely to earn a surprise attack from this perch.

42. Bedroom. This room is reserved for Allit the Breeze but he has yet to use it. Its furniture is simple and plain, a desk, two chairs, a wardrobe, and a bed. On the rare occasion that this cutpurse spends the night in the clanhall, it is as the guest of his friend Conul Uld.

5.4 THE TASK

This adventure's task can be the retrieval of the horn or simply the acquisition of loot. In either case the party must get into and out of the Guild Hall as quickly as possible bringing with them as much profit as possible.

5.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

The adventurers should be started out in or near the tavern of Meke Larnis, the Barley's Yield, just as the commotion is getting hot. Whether as tough looking strangers or as well known professionals, the party will be approached as likely candidates for the mission. The town headman, Tor Menner, will see them as "just the men for the job!" If this does not draw them in, the G.M. may wish to add his own pressures or incentives. Some part of their own goods may be stolen that night, for example.

5.42 AIDS

In this mission the characters can expect little in the way of material aid. The farmers of Meke Larnis have nothing to give that would help them, save food and the simple equipment one might find in such a village. There is a healer woman there who will help as she can but she can send nothing with them.

Helpful information is a little more available. The citizens of Meke Larnis will tell what they can of the Guild Hall and of the Strayhold itself. More help than this, though, will come from Ecuris. His sight has given him warning of the party's intentions and he is bent on helping them. Before they reach the Guild Hall he will find them and recite to them a poem.

Look to the right
Scale the short height.
At the first door
Forget not the poor
'Hind maze for the eyes
There horn you seek lies

Having said his piece he will wander off again; not even force will bring more explanation from him. If they interpret the rede aright and pay heed to it they will climb the Guild Hall wall where it abuts the cliff on the East, find the unlocked pantry door, give a coin to the scullery boy, search behind the audience chamber tapestry and find the horn.

Another possible source of aid is the Beggars' Guild. They are, however, very dangerous allies. If the party has enough bravado to gain an audience with Gam and can convince him that they have a viable plan he may be willing to send along a man to aid them. This will be Portik (see 5.2). He does know his way around the Clanhall but not the location of the vault itself. He is also rude and lacks subtlety. He will care little for the Horn or even the PCs' lives, placing emphasis instead on simply harming the Rogues and gaining some loot for himself. Whether or not Gam will be convinced must be up to the GM, taking into account the stray's description, given above, the PCs' persuasiveness, and the general game balance of the adventure.

5.43 OBSTACLES

As described in sections 3 and 4, the Strayhold is, in itself, a formidable obstacle to any excursion into it. On this mission it will be even more challenging because the Rogues have many ears throughout the township and will take action against the party if they are indiscreet in their search for information. This plus the normal dangers of the city's streets could make even the preliminary stages of the raid exciting.

Once inside the Clanhall, the obstacles are numerous indeed. The greatest threat comes, of course from the Rogues themselves. There is no way that the PCs could fight through the entire clan if the alarm gets out. For this reason the GM must carefully control the situation. Unless the players are very foolish or very rash, the spread of awareness among the Rogues should be strictly limited, perhaps by having any who learn of them try to investigate alone or in small groups rather than raising a general alarm. If the scullery boy is not given a coin by anyone passing through the kitchen he will be certain to mention to the next thief that passes through that there are strangers on the premises. There are guards in the courtyard, and Rogues wander the buildings randomly even at night. In addition there are the various traps the Rogues have set to thwart just such a raid. Finally, time is short; the clansmen do not settle down until one or two in the morning and many rise again just after dawn. Furthermore, every minute taken increases the chance of detection. To succeed and escape alive the party must act with the utmost speed.

5.44 REWARDS

The greatest reward to be had from this raid is the loot that can be taken from the treasure room of the clanhall. There is also the gold raised by the folk of Meke Larnis as well as their gratitude, which would take the form of free food and lodging any time in the future that the PCs should return, some minor healing, and such other gifts as a middle class village might provide. Beyond this there is only the comfort of having done a good deed. Such comfort is valued quite highly by some. The one reward that the party should wish to avoid is any form of fame. The Rogues tend to be a vengeful clan.

5.5 ENCOUNTERS ON THE RAID TO THE ROGUES' CLANHALL

NOTE: *The members of the clan have been taught by their profession that the safest place for one's wealth is on one's person. Consequently they leave little money in their rooms but any whose clothing is searched will be carrying a fair amount of coinage, from several bronze to a gold or two depending upon rank within the clan. Their pouches are usually worn on thongs around their necks, even when they sleep.*

Two encounters, with Haddil the thief and with Ecuris the prophet, have already been detailed above. Further encounters in the Strayhold should be dealt with as described in section 4.5. Inside the clanhall the Rogues will not be expecting any danger; it has been decades since anyone has been so bold as to attack the Rogues at home. For this reason the first reaction of any thief encountering an unknown person inside will be curiosity. The clansmen do not all know each other and there are always new men coming in. It will first be assumed that anyone inside is a member of the clan. This will buy the players valuable time. The table found at the rear of this module details the chances of encountering groups or individuals within the hall. A roll should be made every hour that the party operates within the complex until some alarm is sounded. Once their arrival is made public news, things will get very exciting very quickly and the GM will have to decide where groups of Rogues will be as they rise to the occasion. Alternatively, all encounters may be controlled by the GM to fit the course of the adventure and to keep things from going too badly or too smoothly for the players. As he sees fit he may choose Rogues of varying levels from the NPC table to provide diversity to the game.

6.0 THE CASTLE OF LEARDINOTH

The final adventure in the Strayhold series is a strike against the Mage Leardinoth. As in sections 4 and 5 the city description from section 3 provides a general backdrop for the mission. It is recommended that only experienced players undertake the challenge. It will be helpful if they have already been into the city on one or both of the previous adventures. Even so, however, the GM should realize that this is a mission from which not all of the PCs will necessarily come home alive. If this is not acceptable, he may wish to revamp some of the obstacles contained within.

6.1 THE TALE OF LEARDINOTH

NOTE: *In section 3.3 above the role ofthe Mage in the city's politics is described in some depth; that section should be read carefully before beginning this adventure.*

In his post at the Shattered Step, the Mage serves his lord by promoting the city's activities in the surrounding lands. To facilitate this the Necromancer has aided him in his studies of magic and lore and lent him power to effect the weather and to call to the minds of Rogues and rouges to draw them to his city. The townsfolk aid the Dark Lord's cause by subtly disrupting the peace throughout the southern lands.

The Mage long ago took residence in an ancient castle which stands atop a stone escarpment amid the ravines of the step. It is the only building that stands above the town, by the Mage's order, and commands a view over most of the city. He lives here with his apprentice, Telleman, one human servant and a number of Orcish guards, supplied by the lord of Dol Guldur.

From his high seat Leardinoth looks over the balance of power in the city below. He holds the fierce rivalry of the clans in check by the threat of his power. By this he preserves the town itself from the ruin that all out war between the clansmen would bring. Without him in his tower the Strayhold would soon exist no more.

6.2 THE NPCs

Various residents of the Fire Town that may play a role in this adventure are described in earlier sections. These include Ecuris the Prophet and Eoric the Arborer as well as any number of other shopkeepers or professionals that the party may have occasion to meet in the early stages of the adventure. Following are the three principal NPCs that are specifically attached to this scenario.

6.21 THE MAGE LEARDINOTH

The Mage is a quiet man who cares little for words. His bearing and manner are proud and when he does speak it is in the most formal language. His temper, however, is not good, and his anger is feared by all of his servants, not without reason. His devotion to the Dark Lord stems from a deep hatred he holds for all things which are seen as common by his eyes. The simple joys of a farmer or the love of a man for a woman seem to him to be trite and wasteful, corrupting obstacles to the quest for power and majesty in which, Leardinoth believes, the race of Men should be fully involved. In his station here the Mage but bides his time, waiting for the day when the promises of Sauron will be made good. He waits for a new reign of Men, Elves and Dwarves pushed aside, where nature will be broken to the will of man and all the earth will be turned to a grand monument to the power of his race. In his castle he displays his taste for grandeur in the richness and decoration of his halls. He thrills at the power his dark master has given him to curb the weather and sees it as a sign of still greater things to come. However, all of his hopes are, of course, poorly founded, as are those of any man who trusts in the power of the deceiver, Sauron. The Mage is a tool like so many others that the Dark Lord will use and cast away as suites his own purposes.

As are so many of the Dark Lord's human servants the Mage Leardinoth is of Black Numenorean heritage. He is tall of stature but gaunt and withered in appearance, as if years have weighed heavily upon him. His clothing is all black or grey, robes and long sleeved coats. On his brow he wears a circlet of wrought iron set with one large ruby, carved as a blooming rose. At his belt he wears broad sword of blackened steel with which he is quite proficient, for a man of his profession.

It is little wonder that Leardinoth looks old and battered; his tenure at the Shattered Step has lasted nearly fifteen hundred years. Such longevity comes from his use of the Rose Ever Blooming, an item crafted in days now forgotten. Within this lovely crystal rose he has placed his spirit and its light can be seen glowing from the crimson petals. To it his body is tied by the jewel in the circlet that it wears. Should the circlet be removed, the body will crumble into dust but the spirit will remain within the flower. Whoever should put on the crown next will have to win a battle of wills (a RR against a 10th level attack using modifiers for Presence) or lose his own body to the Mage, his spirit going out of Middle-earth. If, however, the rose can be destroyed, or its stem be severed with the petals still in tact, the Mage's spirit will be forced to return to his body. Such a transference will leave him drained of magical energy for several days, though he will still be physically strong, resuming the aging process where he left it, just beyond his prime. So long as the spirit remains in the rose the body it controls is powered by magic, not by normal means. For this reason it need not eat or drink, cannot be stunned or paralyzed in combat, and suffers no subtractions for injuries received. Stuns resulting from spell failure are still applied.

The sword at his belt holds a magic of its own. It is called the Scholar's Blade and enables the man who uses it for practice, to acquire skill with it as if he were studying spells. In his long life Leardinoth has found a great deal of time for the study of fencing and is now quite an accomplished swordsman, a powerful complement to his formidable magical skills.

Languages: *Adunaic 5, Westron 5, Black Speech 5.* ***Spell Lists:*** *All Open Essence and Mage Only Spells.* ***Base Spells OB:*** *+20.* ***Directed Spells OB:*** *+95.*

6.22 TELLEMAN THE APPRENTICE

The Mage's apprentice, Telleman, is a man of about twenty-five years who has grown up in Leardinoth's service. He was found in the streets below, as an infant, by a castle servant. He seems to be of Dunnish stock and has grown healthy and strong. He takes well to his studies and is himself no mean sorcerer. He follows his master faithfully and is fully trusted by him, taking command of the household whenever the Mage journeys out. He does not, however, have his master's clout with the Orcs that guard the castle and should an emergency arise in his master's absence, he may have difficulty controlling or coordinating them. In their meanness they may even try to foil him and make him look bad.

Languages: *Westron 5, Black Speech 4.* ***Spell Lists:*** *Essence Hand, Illusions, Essence Ways, Spirit Mastery, Light Law, Wind Law, Fire Law, Ice Law.* ***Base Spell OB:*** *+12.* ***Directed Spell OB:*** *+75.*

6.23 POCHAK

The captain of the Mage's Orcish guards in an unsavory fellow called Pochak. He is like the majority of his breed, unpleasant and rude. He is, however, a skillful fighter and a fair tactician. In these

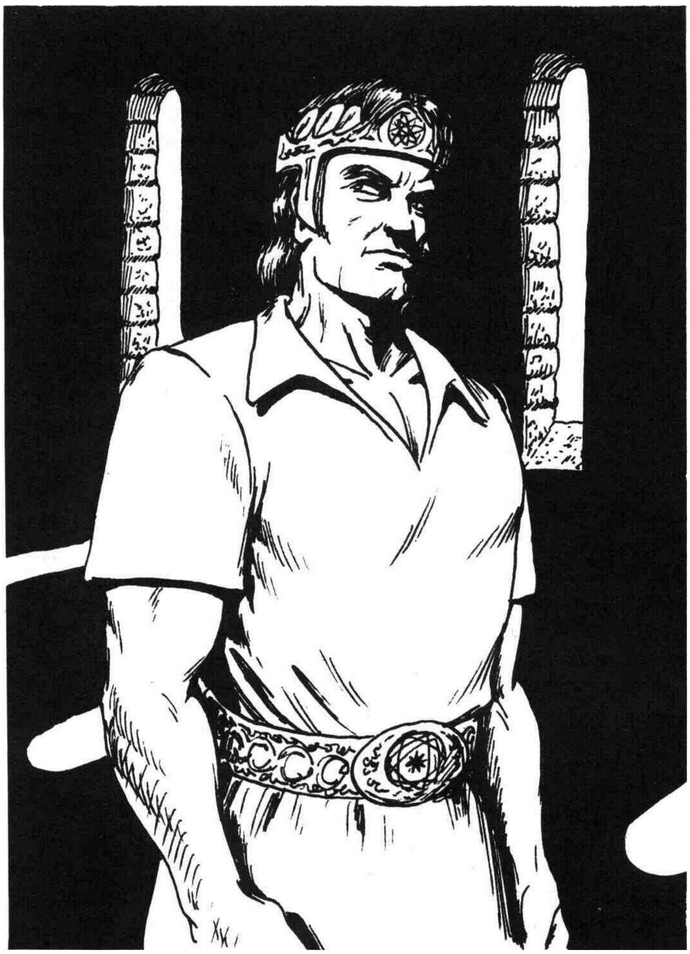
areas he is often underestimated because of his short stature and broken speech. Telleman and he are none too close and either would go a fair distance to damage the other in the eyes of their master.

Pochak goes well armed for one of his kind. He carries the axe of a Dwarven prince that he killed in the Misty Mountains. Its blade holds an edge of outstanding sharpness which gives him +15 to hit in combat. His armor is also of Dwarvish make, sturdy chain, looted from Moria. The captain makes his rounds in a cycle through the castle keeping his Orcs alert. At any given time his whereabouts can be ascertained by the roll of a twelve sided die. A 1-4 means he is asleep in his room (#12); 5 and 6 place him in the Orcs' Commons; a 7 puts him in the Anteroom, an 8, in the Great Hall, a 9, in #2, a 10 in the Entrance Hall, and an 11 or 12 puts him at the gate house.

Notable Skills: *Tumbling 25.* ***Languages:*** *Black Speech 5, Westron 3.*

The guards under his command are armed a bit less well, with rigid leather and the bent swords that are preferred by the Orcs of the Misty Mountains. The are a lazy lot and like most of their kindred they obey through fear rather than loyalty. They spend their days inside the castle. Their hatred of the sun tends to make daytime watchmen inattentive at best. At night they are a bit more lively, sporting and drilling in the castle courtyard and carousing in the halls of their wing.

TELLEMAN



6.3 THE CASTLE OF LEARDINOTH

The knoll on which the castle sits is, like most of those around it, a formidable scarp. It is all of stone, rough and tall. Climbing it without a rope would be a *very hard* maneuver, with checks made every twenty feet of its two hundred foot hight. With a securely fastened rope the job would be much easier, a *light* maneuver. Once atop the knoll the area around the fort can be seen to be uncared for. It is grown with vines and thorny bracken. Though this would provide excellent cover from those who watch from the walls it is so thick that it is almost impossible to move through it without causing quite a bit of noise. The bushes do, however, run right up to the castle walls, so one who could get through them without being heard could get quite close without being seen. Vines also grow far up the walls and provide a tempting ladder for any who might wish to gain entrance. They are, in fact, not strong enough to hold even a light man, once they thin out about ten feet overhead.

The castle itself is built of brownish stone in a plain, blocky style. With its defense in mind its architect gave it few windows. There are none on the ground floor and, aside from arrow slits which are common higher in the walls, only two large windows, one in each of the two large halls, provide any light from outside. The rooves are of red tile and steeply peaked, except the on tops of the towers which are flat. The exterior doors are rarely locked but each has its key in the mechanism on its inside, just in case. The back door is of plain oak with iron hardware. The gate in front is more impressive, sheathed in polished bronze with great knockers, one on each of the double doors. Upon the left, beside the knocker, is an etched representation of a blooming rose.

1. Entrance Hall. This large room is decorated in rich style. A thick blue carpet runs its length with a branch aside leading to the door in the south wall. At the far end, beneath a large stained glass window depicting a great sailing ship, stands a wooden table which is always set with refreshments when the Mage is expecting guests. Around the walls are battle banners from all nations of Men. All of this is lit by a great, hanging chandelier, suspended twenty feet above the floor by thick chains from the beams of the roof. At the north and south walls the ceiling is twenty-five feet high and it rises to thirty-five at its crown.

2. Hall. This simple, unfurnished chamber is lit by white candles in brass sconces that hang at eye level on the walls. The walls are paneled in dark wood and the floor is covered with a large woven rug.

3. Kitchen. Leardinoth's human cook lives and works in this chamber. It holds a large fireplace with an adjacent oven, a preparation table of stout oak, topped with marble, all manner of good quality cooking gear, and the cook's small cot. He is a slave, bought below in town, but serves his master faithfully. Of course his duties are limited by the Mage's eating habits, but he does cook meals for Telleman and, on occasion, for guests of the castle. He very rarely leaves his kitchen and if he hears trouble of any kind, he will do nothing more than cower by his bunk and hope he will not be involved. He has too much fear of his master to be of help to any raiding party and will not appreciate it if he is set free since this is the only life he knows.

4. The Great Hall. The Mage, in his long tenure at the Shattered Step, has yet to give a feast. Instead this hall is used only for the reception of guests whom Leardinoth wishes to impress. Near its center and facing East is a throne of polished ebony which is the chamber's only piece of furniture. It rests on a round red rug but most of the floor is bare and cold. The stonework of the walls and the arched ceiling seem designed to promote a feeling of insignificance in any who stand before the throne. The effect is only enhanced by the large window over the West door which portrays in stained glass the setting of a great red sun. The combination works for the Mage, though one may ask why a man of his power might need such a device. The only comfortable place in the room, besides the throne itself, is the balcony that is set above the East door, twenty feet above the floor. On it are two more chairs for those who might wish to witness the belittlement of a visitor.

5. Anteroom. This is where the Mage's more respected guests wait to meet with him in his reception room. It is comfortably appointed, with four leather upholstered chairs and a low coffee table which holds a silver tea service. The walls are decorated with hangings that depict scenes from the high days of Numenor, the days of such kings as Ar-Pharazon, when Men challenged the power of the Valar.

6. Reception Room. Leardinoth is a man with few friends and judges few to be his peers, but when any member of this small group pays a call, they meet with the Mage in this chamber. It is richly and warmly furnished with a thick carpet covering its stone floor. Low chairs and couches are set about for guests to rest upon, but plenty of room is left for those who might wish to pace. The walls carry a number of trophies, animal heads and the like, as well as a great painting of a mighty city which goes from floor to fifteen foot ceiling on the West wall, at the foot of the stair. Behind this lies a carefully hidden panel (-15 to be perceived) which, if pushed, will cause the floor to lower into the passage that leads to the Mage's vault.

6A. The Vault. The passage to this underground chamber is cut from the rock of the knoll. It begins with steep steps leading into the earth. These are slick with condensation but no real challenge to use at a normal pace. At a run however, it will be a hard maneuver to traverse them without falling. At the stair's foot is a hall which is similarly damp and leads into the vault itself. The treasure that Leardinoth has accumulated over the centuries of his residence here is a considerable hoard. The gold and silver coins total in value almost ten thousand gold. These are held in large chests of oak and iron. In addition there are several other items placed about the chamber. A broadsword in a jeweled scabbard is leaned against one chest. It is magical and confers upon its wielder the ability to fly, as the fifth level spell of the *Lofty Bridge* list, once per day. In the South-West corner are four oak staves which can be used to construct a tent-like magical shelter which will withstand all forms of weather and cannot be detected by any non-magical means. Finally, there is an ancient book which holds many secrets of shipbuilding handed down from the shipwrights of Numenor. To a shipbuilder of Umbar or any other haven this would be of inestimable value, but few will believe such a book exists unless shown it in person.

All this hoard is not without a guard. At the end of the hallway stands a wraith of great power. Once he was a warrior of Arnor and fell in wars against the king of Angmar. Now, his soul has been taken by the Mage and made to serve him. This is possible by a foolish oath the man once swore that he would see the Evermind bloom upon his burial mound before he rested in it. He thought to stave off death but instead just gave up the rest that should go with it. Thus he is trapped and cannot leave Middle-earth before the flowers of his grave are brought before his hollowed eyes. Leardinoth has bound him here with powerful spell so he cannot leave the vault or fail to guard it. His plight is worse, for speech is also denied him. Thus he stands and guards. He fights as he did in life, with a fearsome greatsword (OB 70) and since he cannot be destroyed he is an almost infallible guard. The only hope of passing him lies in bringing him the flowers he longs to see. The Prophet Ecuris has seen this and may someday tell the PCs. The trip to collect the blooms would be quite an adventure in itself.

7. Orcs' Commons. Here Leardinoth's rude guards while away their off-duty hours. The chamber, as might be expected, is strewn with the filth that this breed always generates. The off-duty guards, unless they are asleep upstairs, can usually be found here gambling or fighting amongst themselves. At any given time there will be about seven present, three of lowest rank, three of middling status and one leader. At mealtimes they stoke up the great firepit at the room's center to cook their unsavory victuals, an activity which keeps the juniors busy while the higher ranks call uncouth encouragement. In the bases of the towers are two more fireplaces. One (labeled A) is a forge for repair work on their gear and the other (B) is set with implements of torture for those poor souls whom the Mage sees fit to discipline. Around this second the walls are hung with manacles and often prisoners are held in them. Such men are usually agents of one of the two clans but, as the GM sees fit, may be any NPC who might have crossed Leardinoth's path.

8. The Gate House. What Orcs are on duty at a given time stand watch in this miniature castle, which is built of stone and roofed with tile. It has a small turret by the outward gate with arrow slits and room enough for three to stand upon a ledge, six feet from the ground, where their bows may be fired. Only one of these, though, will actually be in a position to fire on anyone who stands just outside the gate. This East gate can be barred from the inside with a heavy length of wood that will hold against anything short of a battering ram. The larger chamber, farther in, is built on a structure similar to that of the turret. The walls are cut by arrow slits and a ledge runs around both sides at a hight of eight feet and is shielded by a four foot wall on its inward side as well, in case the first gate is breached. The second gate has a great key hole in it with which it may be locked from either side. The key is in the hands of a junior Orc on duty who has instructions to make for the main castle should trouble come, locking his fellows in behind him (The lock is hard to pick.). If caught fleeing he will toss the key to the streets below. The usual compliment of the gate house is seven, with three novices, three rank warriors, and a leader. Of these, three will be armed with crossbows in addition to their Orcish scimitars. The Orcs' hatred of the Sun will tend to make their watch during the day less than perfect. Save when Pochak is present, there is a fifty percent bonus to any attempt to stalk up to the walls in daylight. At night the watch is somewhat better, with only a twenty point addition. Only when their captain is at hand will the Orcs be fully attentive at which times no bonus is added.

9. Stable and Barn. There is little out of the ordinary about the three horse stalls beside the castle's large barn. Two stand empty and one holds a fine dappled mare which is Leardinoth's own steed, the two are tied by an empathic bond that the Mage has cultivated with the aid of Yorl the Trainer. Its harness and fittings, made of highest quality black leather, hang from the stable walls. The Barn itself, however, though it appears normal from its design, houses a most unusual beast. Inside the thatch-roofed stone building lives a great, winged Fell Beast. For his trips to his master at Dol Guldur, the Mage has been given charge of the monster as a mount. The inside of the barn reeks of the beast's foul smell and is strewn with its leavings and bits of the carcasses on which it feeds. It is a most ill tempered creature and will viciously attack anyone (except Leardinoth or Pochak) who comes near it.

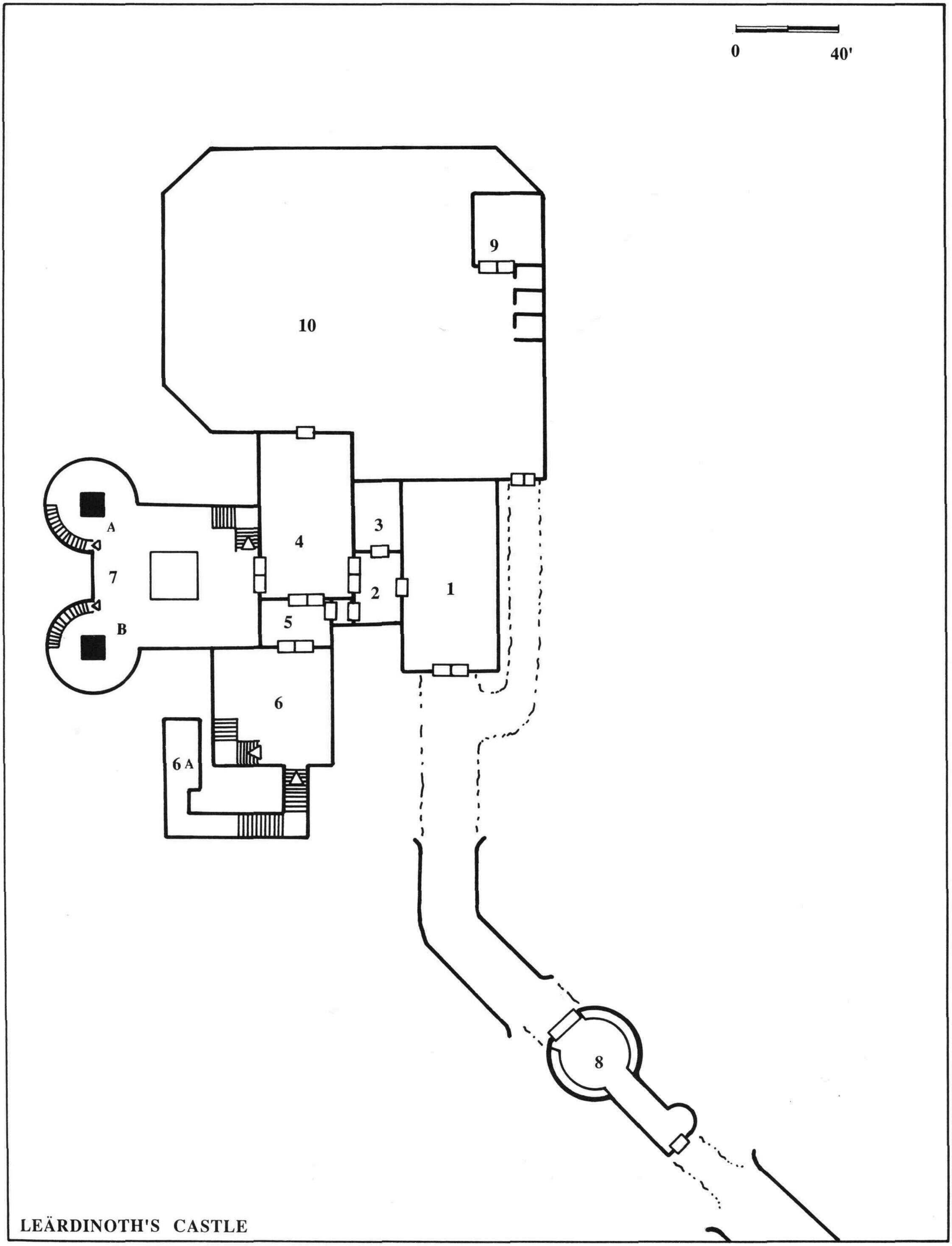
10. Practice Yard. The earth in this yard is beaten flat after years of drilling by the Orc guards. On warm nights several of them may be found here, instead of in their commons, going through fighting practices. The wall is fifteen feet in hight and has a walk around it at ten feet where defenders could stand to fend off an attack. The ledge may be reached by means of stone stairs built every forty feet or so around the yard.

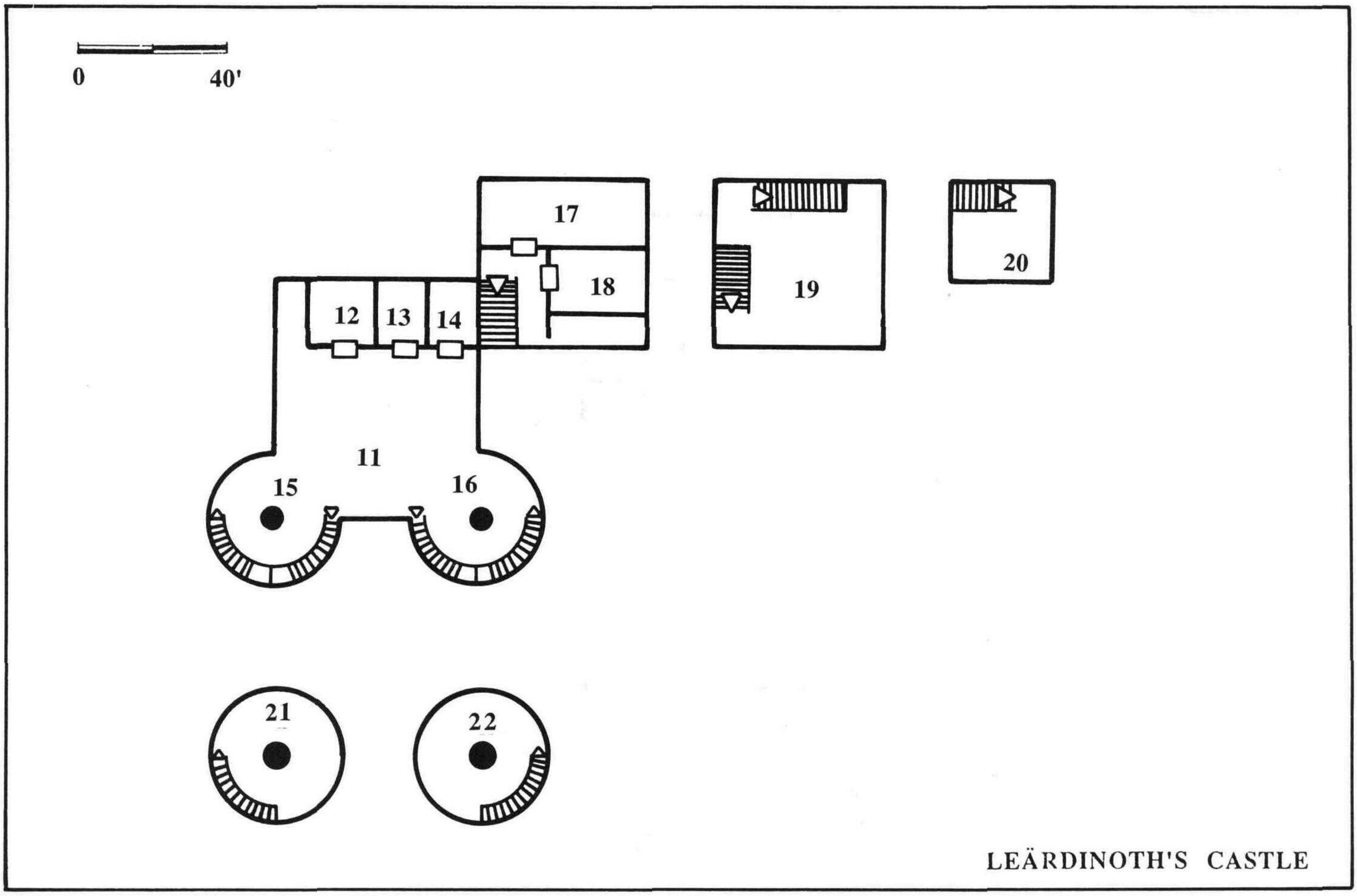
11. Bunkroom. Here the novice and middle rank Orcs of the guard bed down when they are not on duty or lounging below. In cold weather the room's occupants will huddle about the chimney that comes from the firepit below, but most of the time they sleep spread out, each taking as much privacy as the limited space allows. There will typically be four Orcs here, two juniors and to of middle rank. Their distrust of each other has brought them to be light sleepers so a successful stalking roll must be made by any who seek to move about without waking them. They sleep fully clothed and armored with their weapons near at hand; they are truly animals bred for war. They also keep their purses with them day and night, each holding from six to fifteen bronze pieces.

12. Pochak's Chamber. Even the elite among the Orcs of Sauron are dirty and crude. This is clearly shown by the state of Pochak's room. His limited belongings are shoved into the North-East corner, a dirty heap of rags and sacks which hold nothing of value. He sleeps upon another heap of rags in the opposite corner. Scattered through both piles are various articles of spare clothing but little else.

13.—14. Lieutenants' Chambers. There is little difference between these rooms and Pochak's save that they are smaller and a bit more cluttered. Each of Pochak's assistants spends four hours of each day asleep, and they rotate their schedules with his so there is a two in twelve chance that one of them will be abed at any given time. Like their subordinates they sleep fully armored with their weapons near by.

15.—16. Tower Chambers. For the defense of the castle these rooms are stocked well with both provisions and arrows. Their walls are slit for watching and firing at any enemies. Since the earth around the castle fell away, however, such attackers are unlikely to ever appear.


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LEÄRDINOTH'S CASTLE



17. Telleman's Room. The Mage's apprentice is a man of ideals similar to his master's. His room reflects this in its rich and ostentatious decoration. Wall hangings of thick brocade cover the bare stones of the castle. Among them hang paintings that represent the glories of man, the power of Black Numenorean lords, the palaces of Far Harad, and the great ships of old Numenor. He has a small bed to the right of his door, and beside it is a night stand with a small lamp upon it. Also on the stand is a slate that matches that found in the room of Helbran, assistant to Mard Neffar, in the Rogues' clanhall. The Mage has delegated much of the responsibility of keeping track of his spies in the city below to Telleman and it is the apprentice who first reads the messages Helbran sends. A larger lamp stands to the left of the main door which is normally used to light the room. It is the work of Alfric the smith and is made all of brass and etched crystal, its value is over ten gold. In a small chest at its foot are the few possessions which Telleman claims for himself. It is locked with a brass lock, also made by Alfric which is *hard* to pick. The lock also has a trap built in which is *very hard* to detect and *hard* to disarm. If either roll fails and the chest is opened it will be *Teleported* (Mage, *Lofty Bridge)* to to Leardinoth's chamber above leaving *a Fireball* (+30) in its place. The chest contains Telleman's spell book and a ring. The book contains all of the *Mage Only* lists as well as those *of Open Essence.* The ring is magical and gives its wearer double his normal power points if he is a user of Essence. If Telleman sees the need, and has time to get to it he will be wearing this if the castle comes under attack. The door that leads to #18 and the balcony of the Great Hall is hidden behind one of the room's wall hangings.

18. Meditation Chamber. The walls of this room are plastered smooth and painted a uniform white. It is without furnishing and its purpose is not obvious. It is, in fact a meditation chamber which is specially designed to aid in the reaching of a meditative trance. If it is used regularly for practice, a student of meditation will advance in that skill at double the normal rate while spending only normal development points.

19. Study and Library. Here are the tomes and grimories of the Mage Leardinoth. The walls are lined with seven cases, closed with panes of glass. These will open only at the command of someone who wears the Mage's rose upon his brow. Otherwise the glass must be broken, which will bring forth a magical fire which will consume all the books within that case. Among the tomes, if they are ever read, will be found spells of every list known to Western Men, tales of days long past, secrets of building that could be sold to a stonewright for a small fortune, and many other interesting things. However, the books will not keep well outside their glass cases, many of them being over a thousand years old. If any one is carried off it has a fifty percent chance of falling to bits within a few days.

20. Leardinoth's Bedroom. An air of strength and power hangs in this chamber. Its comfortable decor is styled after the houses of Numenor with decorations of a nautical flavor. The furniture is low and sturdy, consisting of the heavy oaken bed, a large writing desk on which among a clutter of papers rests the key to the tower above, and three wooden chairs. At the foot of the bed is a large chest of black wood with silver hardware. It is neither locked nor trapped but on the inside of the lid is an inlaid brass depiction of the one eye of Sauron. Through this eye the Dark lord may look and exert his will should he so desire. Looking into it is perilous indeed for any who do not already serve the Mage's evil Master.

NOTE: *Here the GM must use his discretion and consider the balance of his game. If he wishes he can have the Eye inactive at such time as a PC looks into it, or he can have the poor fool fall to the will of Sauron. The implications of any use of the device should be carefully considered. If the Eye is looking when a PC comes before it it should be treated as if the victim were actually to come before the Dark Lord in Dol Guldur.)*

Inside the chest are three items, one is a robe of a shiny black material which protects as if it were chain but does not encumber its wearer (Treat as +25 chain in combat and as no armor at all other times.). Curled atop this is a small grey cat. It is sleeping very heavily and only actual attempt

to wake it will draw it from its slumber. It is a special beast for it has a pair of furry wings upon its back and its teeth bear a powerful venom (lvl. 8, Lethal). It is not an evil animal but it is extremely clever and has been trained for the Mage by Yorl to act as his assassin when people of the city below displease him, flying and sneaking to catch his victim sleeping and gently nip him until the poison takes effect. If it is awakened but not commanded to kill by the mage it will act as a normal house cat. If it is attacked it will defend itself with great effect but otherwise it will be indifferent to the PCs. It may in fact be befriended by normal means or by a Familiar spell (8th lvl. RR). The other item is a staff of silver filigree which for all its frail appearance is in fact as sturdy as a wooden staff. In combat it is a +10 weapon, favored by the Mage before he came upon his sword.

21. The Mage's Tower. A stair leads from Leardinoth's bedroom to the roof above it. At the roof's center rises a thin spire from the high window of which can be seen a reddish glow. The window is of plain glass but is not made to be opened though if it were broken a Man would be able to slip through. At this tower's foot is a narrow door, made of the same stone as the surrounding walls but slightly recessed. It has a lock which is nearly impossible (-90) to pick. From the door a narrow stair ascends to the highest chamber where, on a low pedestal, is set the glowing rose. It is set into a graceful vase of polished black crystal with many facets. The edges of the facets are razor sharp and anyone attempting to lift the vase without a glove will almost certainly be cut. Into the cut will flow the poison with which the vase is coated, which is a magically preserved form of Galenaana.

22. and 23. Guard Tower Roofes. These are bare and flat, with a four foot crenelated wall all around them. They have rarely been used since the coming of the Mage but are kept in fair condition just in case. Trapdoors cover the stairs that lead down to the towers' lower floors.

6.4 THE TASK

The destruction of the Mage is obviously the task directly at hand. This will, in turn, accomplish a greater good by bringing the city itself into chaos which should result in its dissolution. Both of these fit again into the larger picture of the war against Sauron and the work of the White Council. Such a mission cannot be easy but if it is accomplished it should establish the PCs once and for all as powerful actors in the region and will perhaps draw them into the greater doings of Middle-earth's high powers.

6.41 STARTING THE PLAYERS

In the councils of The Wise, the Mage Leardinoth has long been the object of study. His ties to the black sorcerer of Dol Guldur and his role as the force that perpetuates the Strayhold have slowly come to light. Now they feel it is time that something be done. The wizard Gandalf the Grey has come to Meke Larnis seeking a band of adventurers to break the power of the Mage. The portents available to the White Council show that now is the time, but that time is short. The wizard's mission must be carried out quickly.

The GM must decide what tack Gandalf will take to bring the adventurers into the scheme. He will know something of their attitudes from the divining of Galadriel. Judging by this knowledge he will approach them with a proposition that will appeal to them, whether by offering the loot of the castle, playing on their lust for adventure, or simply calling on them openly to aid the Council.

Once the gauntlet is taken up and the mission accepted, the party will make its way to the Shattered Step and the necessity of rapid action will come to light. Early in their visit they will chance to see the Mage himself, mounted on his winged steed flying off to the West. He is off on a visit to Dol Guldur and has left the castle in the hands of Telleman and the Orcs. Now is indeed the time to strike, as Galadriel foretold.

6.42 AIDS

Beyond their own strength and abilities the PCs may receive aid from two sources. As in the last scenario the Prophet, Ecuris, will have a hand in this. His sight will tell him of the mission and he will set out to deliver a message to the brave souls. Coming to them in the street he will give them the following rhyme:

A Burning Rose
A Pruning Knife
Lay Steel to Stem
And End Its Life

As is his wont, he will not offer any explanations of his poem and will wander off again just as he came, mumbling and singing to himself. The meaning of the rede is obvious to those who know the secrets of the Mage and should gradually become clear to the players as the game goes on.

The second bit of assistance will come from Eoric the Arborer who has a pruning knife to give the PCs if he can find them before they start out. If they do not get the knife, the GM may wish to allow any knife to do the job but having it might add a bit of color to the game.

Under no circumstances should Gandalf be personally brought into the conflict; his role is strictly to inspire the characters to perform the deed; perhaps giving a little advice in the beginning, then moving on.

6.43 OBSTACLES

The primary obstacles of this adventure are simply the castle's occupants. They will do their best to fend off the raid and kill the PCs, at which they may well succeed. Added to this is the challenge of gaining entrance to the castle in the first place, deciding whether to climb the scarp or use the road, and the normal dangers that come with any trip through the streets of Strayhold.

RUIMER THE ORC



6.44 REWARDS

The destruction of Leardinoth will not go unrewarded. The loot of the castle represents a considerable fortune by itself but added to this can be the fort itself. Once the Mage is gone there will be nothing to prevent the PCs from taking it as their own. Beyond these, of course is the status it will give them among the powers of Middle-earth. They may be called on again by those that they served this once.

They may also, however, gain the attention of the Dark Lord in payment for their efforts. The danger this element presents must be handled carefully by the GM and adjusted to suite his plans for the PCs' futures. The Enemy's response can range from great to none, as the GM sees fit.

6.5 ENCOUNTERS

This adventure's encounters will necessarily be somewhat choreographed. The GM will see to the meetings with the Prophet and the Arborer early in the game. Once in the castle there will be only a small element of chance involved in the flow of battle. The GM will have to keep track of the manipulation of forces by Pochak and the actions of Telleman. Both will use strategy if circumstances allow, but they will not work as a team. If he can, Pochak will use the interconnecting chambers 2, 4, and 6 to pitch a battle. Telleman should be allowed to use the balcony of the Great Hall to launch spells against the raiders.

Finally, as the party passes through the bedroom of the Mage he will arrive himself, landing on the roof above with his Fell Beast. In Dol Guldur his mind was touched with fear by his horse in the stable below and he has come home with all haste to set things aright. Leardinoth's tactics will be to use his magic first and then his sword, all in an effort to protect the door to his tower. His beast will fight at his side and the two should provide quite a challenge of gaining entrance to the castle in the first place, deciding whether to climb the scarp or use the road, and the normal dangers that come with any trip through the streets of Strayhold.



7.0 ALTERNATE ADVENTURES

The Strayhold is designed to provide a complex and varied environment for role playing. The three adventures described here can by no means represent the limit of possibilities to be found within or growing out of the Fire Town. There follow a number of ideas for other scenarios that the GM may wish to expand upon, whether to fill the experience gap that lies between the three set out above, or just as elements in a non-related campaign. The city is set up to be versatile and well suited to whatever desires the GM and players may have.

7.1 THE ABDUCTION OF ILLINITH

At the Angry Horse trouble is brewing. The head steward, a Southron called Vekkis Opar, is a spy of the Mage Leardinoth but is soon to be sent back to his home in the distant lands of Far Harad, where he is a high servant of a cruel lord. However, the man has fallen in love with the innkeep's daughter, Illinith, and plans to take her with him. He has her trust as well as her father's and so will be many miles gone before anything is seen to be amiss. Once poor Bohigavia realizes his daughter's danger, though, he will be quick to seek able adventurers to track down Vekkis Opar and return Illinith to her home. He is a wealthy man and will offer great reward for her safe return. The Southron's ties to the forces of evil are not known to the innkeeper, though, and should prove some surprise to his pursuers. It will take quite a bit of daring to follow Opar into his homeland, challenge him and return alive with the girl.

7.2 THE BREAKING OF A CLAN

This would be an adventure aimed at PCs of high level. The task is simply to pillage the Clanhall of the Rogues completely. Motivation can come from any number of sources: revenge, greed, competition, or simply desire for a challenge. This provides a simple hack-and-slash mission on the surface, with the possible repercussions of the entry of the Mage, in an effort to thwart the players. Leardinoth and the many Rogues living within, in addition to the challenges to be met in the hall's deeper regions should provide for quite exciting play for an experienced party. The results of such a raid will go beyond the walls of the clanhall and even beyond the Fire Town. Rogues throughout the region will change their habits if the clan is broken, or even reorganized due to the damage done. This may lead to the rise of other clans or powers to fill the gap.

7.3 RESCUE FROM THE BROTHERHOOD

The abduction of a friend of the PCs by the Torturers could spur this excursion. Such a raid would run along similar lines to those described in Section 6.0 for the raid on the Rogues Clan. The Brotherhoods, however, are not as numerous as the Rogues, and their home is not so strong. For a powerful party the main challenge will not be getting in and out alive, it will be finding the prisoner that they seek while he still breaths. For this they need be sure that no warning comes to the Shadows for any carelessness will change the mission from a rescue to simple revenge.

7.4 EMPLOYMENT IN THE STRAYHOLD

Further opportunities can be found through signing on with any of the several employers of the city. The mercenary troops are always in need of men who can prove their worth. This could lead to fighting or adventuring through the farthest reaches of Middle-earth. Both clans and the Brotherhoods as well will take on new journeymen, giving credit for any demonstrable skills which the applicant may already have. If the players are so inclined, these avenues could lead to very interesting adventure in the city itself or out across Rhovanion. Even the Mage will occasionally hire a party to undertake a mission for which he has no time, but he usually requires that his agents be already known for their service to the forces of Darkness.

8.0 GAMEMASTER NOTES

1. The detailed descriptions of the various shops and buildings may prove too time consuming for normal play. The G.M. should be prepared to edit them or remove them altogether wherever they are not indispensable to the scenario and when playing time runs short.
2. The city and adventures described here have a great degree of versatility, in that the temporal setting is not necessarily fixed. They have been written with the idea that they would run concurrently with Bilbo's adventures as described in ***The Hobbit.*** However, changing only the role of the White Council in the third segment, they can be run in almost any historical period of Middle-earth. Further, if a few more things are altered these same scenarios can be set into almost any period in almost any world.
3. In Section 2.0, the last character provided has an item that may be used for the charming of winged creatures. The spell here is 15th level and may be used as necessary and the GM should note that the Fell Beast of Leardinoth is, in fact, a winged creature.

8.1 ENCOUNTER CHART

Encounter	Location					
	Lower City	Upper City	Rogues' Clan	Castle	Loose Jack's	Flagon Lane
No Encounters w/city folk	01-70	01-60	01-68	01-50	01-60	01-60
Mugger(s)	71-72	61-67	69-77	—	61-65	61-65
Thieves/Rogues	73-75	68-74	78-86	—	66-70	66-70
Drunk(s)	76-77	75-79	—	—	71-76	71-80
Doxy	78-79	80-81	—	—	77-80	81-83
Assassin/Slayman	80-81	82-86	87	51	81-83	84-87
Warrior	82-89	87-90	88	52-88	84-90	88-91
Mage	90-97	91-94	89	89	91-94	92-94
Special (roll again)	98-00	95-00	90-00	90-00	95-00	95-00
Special Encounters						
Bisc	01-14	01-09	—	—	01-10	01-12
Alfric	15-25	10-13	—	—	11-15	13-16
Eoric	26-30	14-16	—	—	16-20	17-21
Ecuris	31-39	17-25	01-05	—	21-28	22-28
Urilla	40-45	26-31	06-18	—	29-30	29-31
Haunis	46-50	32-37	19-31	—	31-36	32-36
Helbran	51-53	38-43	32-43	01-10	37-41	37-43
Ferrin Tal	54-57	44-49	44-54	—	42-45	44-45
Vecis	58-60	50	—	11-20	46-47	46-47
Yorl w/beast	61-65	51-53	—	—	48-53	48-50
Midmin Parsel	66-69	54	—	—	54	51-52
Rillit the Squirrel	70-72	55-60	55-60	—	55-61	53-58
Hrothgar Ednew	73-74	61-66	67-79	—	62-68	59-65
Oric Galabas	75-77	67-70	—	21-30	69-71	66-67
Allit	78-80	71-76	80-87	—	72-80	68-76
Conúl Uld	81-83	77-81	88-94	—	81-82	76-82
Mard Neffar	84-85	82-85	95-00	—	83-90	83-89
Gam	86-89	86-89	—	—	91-95	90-94
Telleman	90-97	90-97	—	31-50	96-99	95-99
Ruimer	—	—	—	51-74	—	—
Leärdinoth	98-00	98-00	—	75-00	00	00

8.2 STATS FOR NPCs IN THE STRAYHOLD

NAME	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile OB	MovM	Notes
Arcle Terrin	4	20	No	S	N	N	15da	—	+5	Dúnadan Scholar
Korlin	1	35	Ch	15	N	N	47ha	28sb	+10	Northman Warrior
Vellser Orlit	2	47	RL	15	Y	N	56bs	36LB	+15	Northman Warrior
Ekuris	8	50	No	20	N	N	10da	—	+5	Dúnadan Bard (Seer)
Haddil	2	35	SL	15	N	N	40ss	37sb	+15	Dúnadan Scout
Lorril Tesserne	8	55	No	5	N	N	40cl	—	+5	Northman/ Animist
Portik	3	38	SL	20	N	N	63ss	43ts	+10	Urban Man Scout
Leärdinoth	10	61	No	15	N	N	55bs	—	+10	Black Númenorean Mage
Pochack	7	110	Ch	15	Y	A/L	120ha	86lcb	+10	Orc Warrior
Telleman	6	41	No	10	N	N	10da	15da	+15	Dunman Mage
Allit the Breeze	7	59	SL	15	N	N	86ss	61sb	+15	Urban Man Scout
Ferrin Gordlin	5	49	SL	20	N	N	71ss	80ts	+20	Urban Man Scout
Gam the Gorgeous	8	114	SL	10	Y	N	115bs	—	+5	Urban Man Warrior
Havnis	5	81	SL	10	Y	N	95cl	60da	+5	Urban Man Warrior
Helbran	5	51	SL	20	N	N	80ss	67ts	+10	Urban Man Scout
Mard Neffar	7	49	SL	15	N	N	52ss	47da	+10	Urban Man Bard
Ossim Rallah	8	120	RL	15	Y	N	110sc	85sb	+5	Southron Warrior
Rillit the Squirrel	7	62	SL	30	N	N	67ss	86lcb	+15	Urban Man Scout
Ullis	5	47	SL	15	N	N	80ss	55sb	+10	Urban Man Scout
Cannal Nul	8	65	Ch	65	N	N	109ss	75sb	+10	Urban Man Scout

8.3 STATS FOR NAMELESS NPCs

NAME	Lvl	Hits	AT	DB	Sh	Gr	Melee OB	Missile OB	MovM	Notes
Thief	1	25	SL	20	N	N	41	30	10	Scout
Thief	2	35	RL	15	N	N	43	33	10	Warrior
Thief	3	38	SL	20	N	N	80	55	10	Scout
Thief	5	50	SL	20	N	N	80	55	10	Scout
Beggar	1	35	No	15	N	N	43	33	10	Warrior
Beggar	3	60	No	15	N	N	69	44	10	Warrior
Beggar	5	86	RL	15	N	N	95	60	10	Warrior (armor hidden under rags)
Orc	1	35	RL	25	N	N	35sc	30	20	Warrior
Orc	3	60	RL	30	N	N	70sc	45	20	Warrior
Orc	5	85	RL	30	N	N	95sc	65	20	Warrior
Lockwarden	1+	30+		20+	N	N	20+ba	—	15	
Doorkeep	5	80	RL	20	N	N	80ma	—	15	Can assume any shape
Winged Fell Beast	20	210	Ch	35	N	N	95bi(lg)	—	30	
Leärdinoth's Cat	2	30	No	35	N	N	25tc(sm)	—	30	Poison; flight

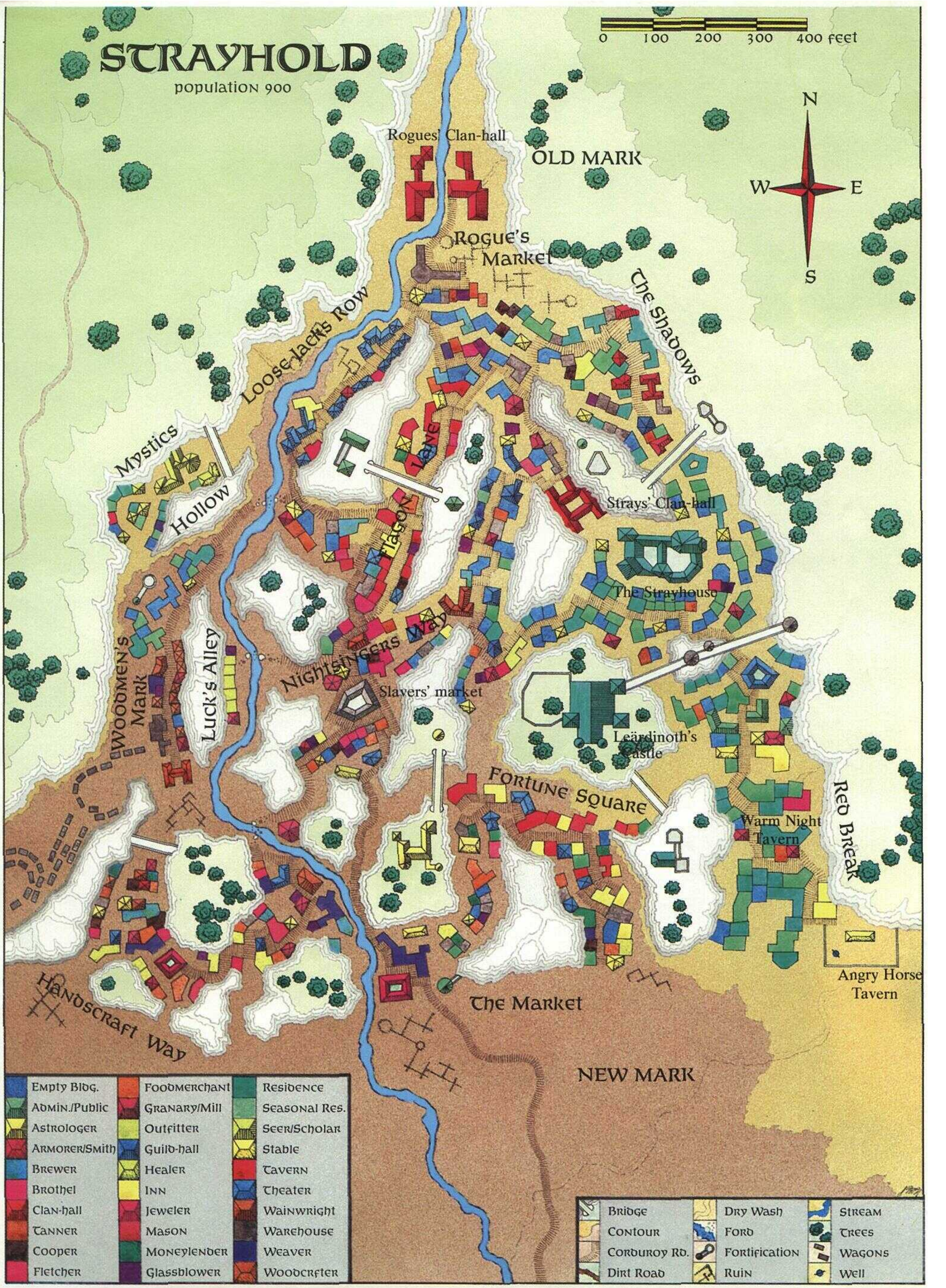
CODES The statistics given describe each NPC; a more detailed description of some of the more important NPC's can be found in the main text. Some of the codes are self-explanatory **Lvl** (level) **Hits, Sh** (shield), and Mov M (movement and maneuver bonus). The more complex codes are listed below

AT (Armor Type) The two letter code gives the being's ***MERP*** armor type (No = No Armor, SL = Soft leather, RL = Rigid Leather, Ch = Chain, Pl = Plate).

DB (Defensive Bonus) Note defensive bonuses include stats and shield. Shield references include quality bonuses (e.g. "Y5" indicates "Yes, a +5 shield").

Gr (Greaves) "A" and "L" are used to indicate arm and leg greaves respectively.

OB's (OffensiveBonuses) Weapon abbreviations follow OB's fa—falchion, ss—short sword, bs—broadsword, sc—scimitar, th—two-handed sword, ma — mace, ha — hand axe, wh — war hammer, ba — battle axe, wm — war mattock, cl — club, qs — quarter staff, da — dagger, sp — spear, ml—mounted lance, ja—javelin, pa—pole arm, si—sling, cb—composite bow, sb—short bow, Ib—long bow, lcb—light crossbow, hcb — heavy crossbow, bo — bola, wp — whip, ts — throwing star, hb — halberd. Melee and missile offensive bonuses include the bonus for the combatant's best weapon in that category.

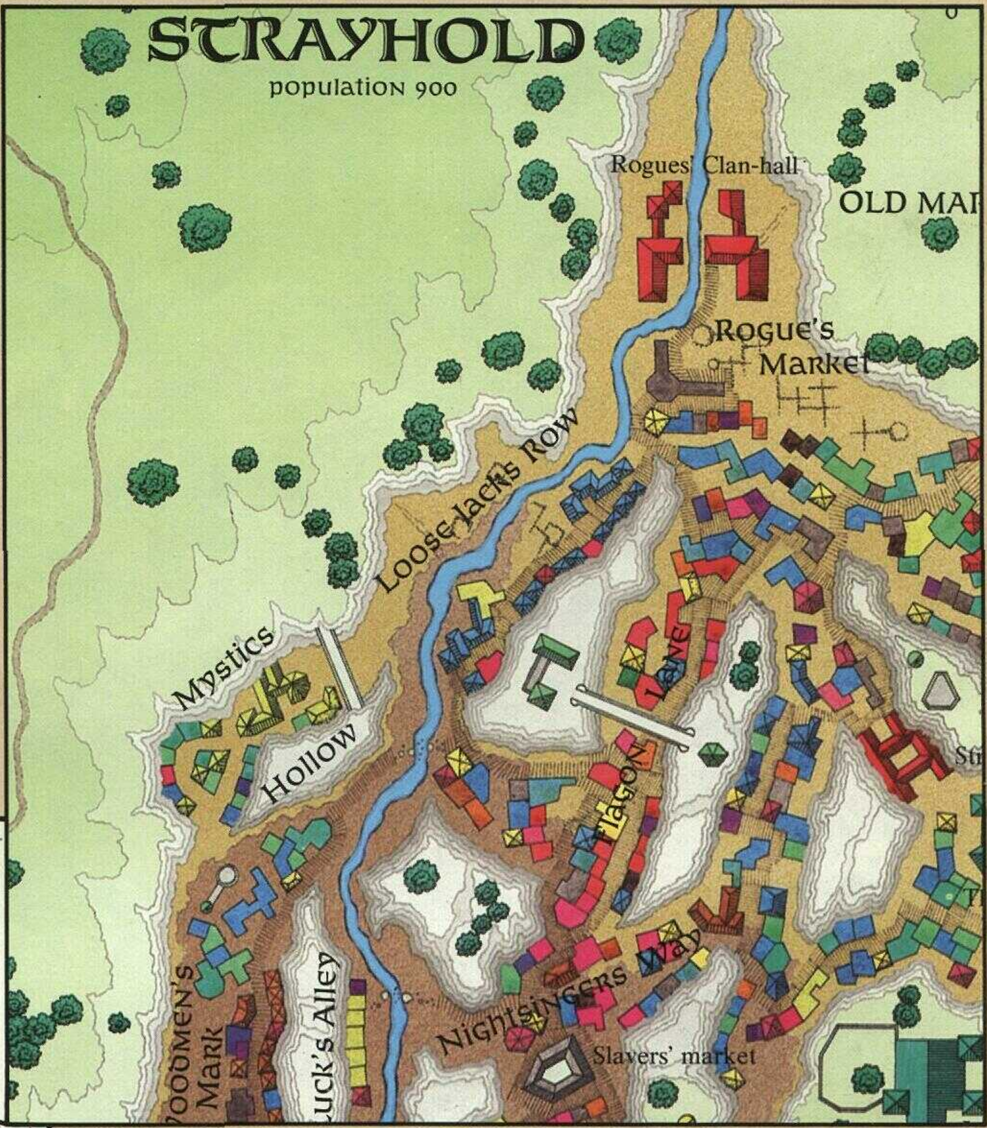


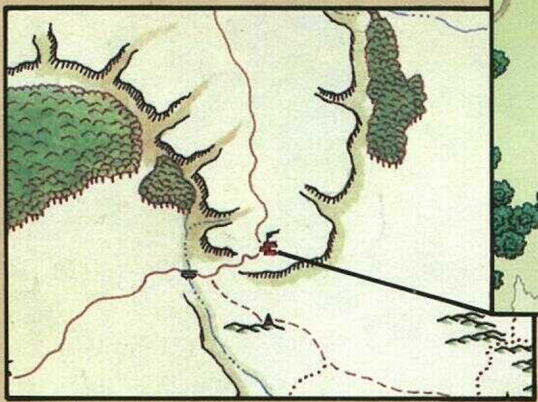
STRAYHOLD
population 900
0 100 200 300 400 feet
N
W
E
S
Rogues' Clan-hall
OLD MARK
Rogue's Market
The Shadows
Loose-Jacks Row
Mystics Hollow
Flagon Lane
Strays' Clan-hall
The Strayhouse
Woodmen's Mark
Luck's Alley
Nightsingers Way
Slavers' market
Leärdinoth's Castle
Fortune Square
Warm Night Tavern
Red Break
Angry Horse Tavern
The Market
Handscraft Way
NEW MARK
Empty Bldg.
Admin./Public
Astrologer
Armorer/Smith
Brewer
Brothel
Clan-hall
Tanner
Cooper
Fletcher
Foodmerchant
Granary/Mill
Outfitter
Guild-hall
Healer
Inn
Jeweler
Mason
Moneylender
Glassblower
Residence
Seasonal Res.
Seer/Scholar
Stable
Tavern
Theater
Wainwright
Warehouse
Weaver
Woodcrfter
Bridge
Contour
Corduroy Rd.
Dirt Road
Dry Wash
Ford
Fortification
Ruin
Stream
Trees
Wagons
Well

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